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La Mort d'Arthure.

THE

HISTORY OF KING ARTHUR

AND OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE.

COMPILED BY SIR THOMAS MALORY, Knt.

EDITED FROM THE TEXT OF THE EDITION OF 1634,

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY THOMAS WRIGHT, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.,

HON. M.R.S.L. ETC. CORRESPONDING MEMBER

OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

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HISTORIE OF KING ARTHUR

AND HIS NOBLE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE.

CHAP. I.—How sir Launcelot rode on his adventures, and how he holpe a dolourous lady from paine, and how he fought with a dragon.

NOW leave wee off sir Tristram de Liones, and speake we of sir Launcelot du Lake, and sir Galahad, sir Launcelots sonne, how hee was begotten, and in what maner. Afore the time that sir Galahad[1] was begotten or born, there came in an hermit unto king Arthur on Whitsunday, as the knights sat at the round table; and when the hermit saw the siege perilous, hee asked the king and all the knights why that siege was voide. King Arthur and all the knights answered, "There shall never none sit in that siege but one, but if he be destroyed." Then said the hermit, "Wot yee not what he is?" "Nay," said king Arthur and all the knights, "we wot not who he is that shall sit therein." "Then wot I," said the hermit, "for he that shall sit in that siege is yet unborne and ungotten, and this same yeare he shall be gotten that shal sit in that siege perilous, and hee shall win the sanegreall." When

[1] *Galahad.—Galahalt,* Caxton. He is usually called Galaad in the French prose romance.

the hermit had made this mention, he departed from the court of king Arthur. And then after the feast sir Launcelot rode on his adventures, till upon a time by adventure hee passed over the bridge of Corbin,[1] and there he saw the fairest tower that ever he saw, and thereunder was a faire towne full of people, and all the people, men and women, cried all at once, "Yee are welcome, sir Launcelot du Lake, the floure of all knighthood; for by thee all we shall be holpen out of danger." "What meane yee," said sir Launcelot, "that ye crie so upon me?" "Ah, faire knight," said they all, "here is within this tower a dolorous lady, that hath beene there in paines many winters; for ever she boyleth in scalding water. And but late," said all the people, "sir Gawaine was here, and he might not helpe her, and so he left her still in paine." "So may I," said sir Launcelot, "leave her in paine as wel as sir Gawaine hath done." "Nay," said the people, "wee know well that it is sir Launcelot that shall deliver her." "Well," said sir Launcelot, "then shew me what I shall doe." Then they brought sir Launcelot into the tower. And when he came to the chamber there as this lady was, the doores of iron unlocked and unboulted, and so sir Launcelot went into the chamber that was as hot as any stew, and there sir Launcelot tooke the fairest lady by the hand that ever he saw, and shee was all naked as a needell. And by enchantment queene Morgan le Fay and the queen of Northgalis had put her there in those paines, because she was called one of the fairest ladies in that countrey. And there shee had beene well five yeares, and never might shee bee delivered out of her great paines unto the time that the best knight of the world had taken her by the hand. Then the people brought her clothes. And when shee was arrayed, sir Launcelot thought shee was the fairest lady in the world, but if it were queene Guenever. Then this lady said unto sir Launcelot, "Sir, if it please you will yee goe

[1] *Corbin.*—Perhaps this is meant for Corwen in Merionethshire.

with mee here by into a chappel, that we may give lauding and praising unto Almighty God?" "Madame," said sir Launcelot, "come on with me, I will goe with you." So when they came there, they gave thankes unto God, and all the people, learned and lewed, gave thanks unto God, and said, "Sir knight, sith ye have delivered this lady, yee shall deliver us from a serpent that is here in a tombe." Then sir Launcelot tooke his shield, and said, "Bring me thither, and what I may doe unto the pleasure of God and you, I will doe it." So when sir Launcelot came there, he saw written upon the tombe letters of gold that said thus, "Heere shall come a libbard of kings blood, and hee shall slay this serpent, and this libbard shall engender a lyon in this forraine countrey, the which lyon shall passe all other knights." So then sir Launcelot lift up the tombe, and there came out an horible and a fenly[1] dragon, spitting fire out of his mouth.

Then sir Launcelot drew out his sword, and fought with the dragon long, and at the last with great paine sir Launcelot slew the dragon. Therewithall came king Pelles the good and noble knight, and saluted sir Launcelot, and hee him againe. "Faire knight," said the king, "what is your name? I require you of your knighthood tell me."

CHAP. II.—How sir Launcelot came unto king Pelles, and of the sancgreal, and how hee begate Galahad upon faire Elaine, king Pelles daughter.

IR," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye well my name is sir Launcelot du Lake." "And my name is sir Pelles, king of the forrain countrey, and nigh cosin unto Joseph of Arimathy."[2] Then either of them made much of other, and so they went into

[1] *Fenly.—Fyendly*, Caxton.

[2] *Joseph of Arimathy.*—See vol. i. p. 83, where the earlier history ofking Pelles, or Pellain, is recounted.

the castle for to take their repast. And anon there came in a dove at a window, and in her bill there seemed a little seneer of gold, and therewithal there was such a savour as though all the spicery of the world had beene there; and forthwithall there was upon the table all manner of meates and drinkes that they could thinke upon. So there came a damosell, passing faire and young, and she beare a vessell of gold betweene her hands, and thereto the king kneeled devoutly and said his prayers, and so did all that were there. "Oh, Jesu," said sir Launcelot, "what may this meane?" "This is," said king Pelles, "the richest thing that any man hath living; and when this thing goeth about, the round table shall bee broken. And wit yee well," said king Pelles, "that this is the holy sanegreall[1] which ye have heere seene." So king Pelles and sir Launcelot led their lives the most part of that day. And full faine would king Pelles have found the meanes to have had sir Launcelot for to have laien by his daughter, faire dame Elaine, and for this entent. The king knew wel that sir Launcelot should get a child upon his daughter, the which should be named sir Galahad the good knight, by whom all the forraine countrey should bee brought out of danger, and by him the holy grale would bee achieved. Then came there forth a lady, which was called dame Brisen, and shee said unto king Pelles, "Sir, wit yee well that sir Launcelot loveth no lady in the world but onely queene Guenever, and therefore yee must worke by my counsaile, and I shall make him to lye with your daughter Elaine, and he shal not wit but that he lyeth with queene Guenever." "Oh, the most fairest lady dame Brisen," said king Pelles, "hope

[1] *The holy sancgreall.*—The saint graal, or holy dish, was pretended to be the vessel in which the paschal lamb was placed at our Saviour's last supper; and which, according to the fable, Joseph of Arimathæa preserved and brought with him to Britain. It is sufficiently described in the following pages. The Roman du St. Graal is one of the longest and dullest of the great mediæval romances of the cycle of king Arthur.

yee to bring this about?" "Sir," said shee, "upon paine of my life let mee deale." For this dame Brisen was one of the greatest enchantresses that was at that time in the world living. Then anon by dame Brisens wit shee made one to come to sir Launcelot that he knew well, and this man brought him a ring[1] from queen Guenever, like as he had come from her, and such a one for the most part as shee was wont to weare. And when sir Launcelot saw that token, wit ye well he was never so faine. "Where is my lady queene Guenever?" said sir Lancelot. "She is in the castle of Case,"[2] said the messenger, "but five mile hence." Then sir Launcelot thought to be there that same night. And then this dame Brisen, by the commandement of king Pelles, let send his daughter to that castle with twenty-five knights. Then sir Launcelot against night rode unto that castle, and there anon he was received worshipfully, with such people unto him seeming as were about queene Guenevers secret. So when sir Launcelot was alighted, he asked where the queene was. So dame Brisen said she was in her bed. And then the people were avoided, and sir Launcelot was led unto his chamber. And then dame Brisen brought sir Launcelot a cuppe full of wine, and as soone as hee had drunke that wine hee was so assoted and so mad that hee might make no delay, but without any let hee went to bed, and hee wend that the lady Elaine had beene queene Guenever. Wit yee well that sir Launcelot was glad, and so was the lady dame Elaine, that shee had gotten sir Launcelot in her armes, for well shee knew that the same night should be gotten upon her sir Galahad, that

[1] *A ring.*—It has been observed in a former note, (vol. ii. p. 271,) that the ring played an important part in all the transactions of the Middle Ages. It identified the individual who bore it, and therefore was used as a token of delegation of authority, of recognition, of identification of the person, and for many other purposes.

[2] *Castle of Case.*—It is not impossible that the writer of the romance may have had in his mind the rather celebrated old castle of Cause, or Caurse, the vast entrenchments of which are still visible near Minsterley, on the Welsh border of Shropshire.

should prove the best knight of the world. And so they lay together unto sixe of the clooke[1] on the morrow; and all the windowes and holes of that chamber were stopped, that no manner of light might be seene. And then sir Launcelot remembred him, and he arose and went to the window.

CHAP. III.—How sir Launcelot was displeased when hee knew that hee had laien by dame Elaine, and how she was delivered of Galahad.

ND anon as he had unshut the window, the enchauntment was gone; then hee knew himselfe that hee had done amisse. "Alas," said hee, "that I have lived so long, now am I shamed." So then hee gate his sword in his hand, and said, "Thou traitresse, what art thou that I have layen by all this night? thou shalt die right heere of my hand." Then this faire lady dame Elaine skipped out of her bed all naked, and kneeled downe before sir Launcelot, and said, "Faire curteous knight, come of kings blood, I require you have mercy upon mee; and as thou art renowned the most noble knight of the world, sley me not, for I have in my wombe him by thee that shall bee the most noblest knight of the world." "Ah, thou false traitresse," said sir Launcelot, "why hast thou thus betrayed mee? Anon tell mee what thou art?" She answered and said, "Sir, I am Elaine, the daughter of king Pelles." "Well," said sir Launcelot, "I will forgive you this deede:" and therewith hee tooke her up in his armes and kissed her, for shee was a faire lady, and thereto lusty and young, and as wise as any was that time living. "So God me helpe," said sir Launcelot, "I may not put this blame to you, but her that made this enchantment upon me, as betweene you and me; and I

[1] *Sixe of the clooke.—Untyl undorne of the morn,* Caxton. Undern is usually considered as corresponding to nine o'clock in the morning.

may find that same lady Brisen, shee shall leese her head for her witchcraft, for there was never knight so deceived as I am this night." And so sir Launcelot arayed him and armed him, and tooke his leave mildly of that young lady dame Elaine, and so he departed. Then she said, "My lord sir Launcelot, I beseech you see me as soone as you may, for I have obeyed me unto the prophesy that my father told me, and by his commandement, to fulfill this prophesie, I have given the greatest richesse and the fairest floure that ever I had, that is my maidenhood, which I shall never have againe; and therefore, gentle knight, owe me your good wil." And so sir Launcelot arayed him, and was armed, and tooke his leave mildly of that young lady dame Elaine, and so hee departed and rode till hee came to the castle of Corbin, where her father was. And as soone as her time came, shee was delivered of a faire child, and they christned him, and named him Galahad. And wit yee well that child was well kept and well nourished; and he was thus named Galahad, for because sir Launcelot was so named at the font stone, and after that the lady of the lake confirmed him sir Launcelot du Lake. Then after that this lady Elaine was delivered and churched, there came a knight unto her whose name was sir Bromell le Plech, which was a great lord, and he had loved that lady long, and he evermore desired her that hee might wed her, and so by no meanes she could put him off; till upon a day she said to sir Bromell, "Wit yee well, sir knight, I will not love you, for my love is set upon the best knight of the world." "Who is he?" said sir Bromell. "Sir," said she, "it is sir Launcelot du Lake that I love, and none other, therefore woe mee no longer." "Ye say well," said sir Bromell, "and sithence yee have tould me so much, yee shall have but little joy of sir Lancelot, for I shal sley him where ever I meet him." "Sir," said the lady Elaine, "doe to him no treason." "Wit ye wel, my lady," said sir Bromell, "and I promise you the twelve moneths I shall

keepe the bridge of Corbin, for sir Lancelots sake, that he shall neither come nor go to you but I shal meet with him."

CHAP. IV.—How sir Bors came to dame Elaine and saw Galahad, and how he was fed with the sancgreall.

THEN as it befell by fortune and adventure, sir Bors de Ganis, which was nephew unto sir Launcelot, came over that bridge, and ther sir Bromell and sir Bors justed, and sir Bors smote sir Bromell such a buffet that he bare him over his horse taile. And then sir Bromell, like as an hardy knight, pulled out his sword and dressed his shield to doe battaile with sir Bors; and then sir Bors alighted, and avoyded his horse, and there they dashed together many sad strookes, and long thus they fought till at the last sir Bromell was laid unto the ground. And there sir Bors began for to unlace his helme for to sley him. Then sir Bromel cried sir Bors mercy, and yeelded him. "Well," said sir Bors, "upon this covenant thou shalt have thy life, so thou goe unto sir Launcelot upon Whitsunday that next commeth, and yeeld thee unto him as a knight recreant." "I will doe so," said sir Bromell; and that he sware upon the crosse of the sword, and so he let him depart. And sir Bors rode unto king Pelles, that was within Corbin. And when the king and dame Elaine his daughter knew that sir Bors was nephew unto sir Launcelot, they made him great cheere. Then said dame Elaine, "We mervaile much where sir Launcelot is, for he came never heere but once." "Mervaile not," said sir Bors, "for all this halfe yeare he hath bene in prison with queene Morgan le Fay, king Arthurs sister." "Alas," said dame Elaine, "that me sore repenteth." And ever sir Bors beheld the child that shee had in her armes; and ever him seemed it was passing like sir Launcelot. "Truly," said dame Elaine, "wit yee well that this child he gate upon me." Then sir Bors wept for

joy; and he prayed unto God the child might prove as good a knight as his father was. And so ther came in a whit dove, and shee beare a little sencer of gold in her bill, and anon there was all manner of meates and drinkes; and there was a maiden that bare the sanegreall, and she said openly, "Wit ye well, sir Bors, that this child is Galahad that shall sit in the siege perilous, and also shall achive the sanegreall; and hee shall be much better then ever was sir Launcelot du Lake, that is his owne father." And then they kneeled downe and made their devotions, and there was such a savour as all the spicery in the world had beene there. And when the dove tooke her flight, the maiden vanished away with the sanegreal as she came. "Sir," said sir Bors unto king Pelles, "this castle may well be called the castle adventurous, for here be many strange adventures." "That is truth," said king Pelles, "for well may this place be called the adventurous place; for heere come but few knights that goe away with any worship; be hee never so strong, heere hee may be proved; and but late agoe sir Gawaine the good knight gate but little worship heere. For I let you to wit," said king Pelles, "here shall no knight winne no worship but if hee be of worship himselfe, and of good living, and that loveth God, and dreadeth God, and else hee getteth no worship heere, be hee never so hardy." "That is a wonderfull thing," said sir Bors; "what yee meane in this countrey I wote not, for yee have many strange adventures; therfore I will lie in this castle this night." "Yee shall not doe so," said king Pelles, "by my counsell; for it is hard and yee escape without a shame." "I shall take the adventure that will befall me," said sir Bors. "Then I counsaile you," said king Pelles, "for to be confessed cleane." "As for that," said sir Bors, "I will be confessed with a good will." So sir Bors was confessed; and for all women sir Bors was a virgine, save for one, which was the daughter of king Brandegoris, and on her hee gat a child that hight Elaine,

and save for her sir Bors was a cleane maide. And so sir Bors was led to bed into a faire large chamber, and many doores were shut about that chamber. And when sir Bors espied all those doores, hee made all the people to avoide, for he might have no body with him; but in no wise sir Bors would unarme him, but so laid him upon the bed. And right so he saw come in a light that he might wel see a speare great and long which come straight upon him pointlong.[1] And so sir Bors seemed that the head of the speare brent like a taper; and anon, or sir Bors wist, the speare head smote him into the shoulder an hand breadth in deepnesse, and that wound grieved sir Bors passing sore, and then he laid him downe againe for paine; and anon therwithall came a knight all armed with his shield on his shoulder, and his sword drawen in his hand, and he said to sir Bors, "Arise, sir knight, and fight with mee." "I am sore hurt," said sir Bors, "but yet I shall not faile thee." And then sir Bors start up, and dressed his shield, and then they lashed together mightely a great while. And so at the last sir Bors beare him alwaies backward, untill hee came to a chamber doore, and there that knight went into that chamber and ther rested him a great while. And when he had rested him, he came out freshly againe, and began a new battaile with sir Bors mightely and strongly.

CHAP. V.—How sir Bors made sir Pediver to yeeld him, and of mervailous adventures that he had, and how he achieved them.

THEN sir Bors thought hee should no more goe into that chamber to rest him; and so sir Bors dressed him betweene the knight and the chamber doore, and there sir Bors smote him so sore that hee fell downe. And then that knight yeelded him to sir Bors. "What is your name?" said sir Bors. "Sir," said that knight, "my name is sir Pedivere of the straight

[1] *Pointlong.—Poyntelynge*, Caxton; i. e. point foremost.

marches." So sir Bors made him sweare at Whitsunday next comming for to bee at the court of king Arthur, and yeeld him there as prisoner and overcome knight by the hands of sir Bors. So thus departed sir Pedivere of the straight marches. And then sir Bors lay him downe for to rest him; and then he heard and felt much noyse in that chamber, and then sir Bors espied that there came in, he wist not whether at the doores or windowes, a shot of arowes and quarels,[1] so thicke that hee had great mervaile of it, and there fell many upon him and hurt him in the bare places. And then sir Bors was ware where came in an hedious lyon, so sir Bors dressed him unto the lyon, and anon the lyon bereft him of his shield; and with his sword sir Bors smote off the lyons head. Right so sir Bors foorthwith saw a dragon in the court, passing horrible, and there seemed letters of gold written in his forehead; and sir Bors thought that the letters made a signification of his lord king Arthur. Right so there came an horrible libbard and an old, and there they fought long, and did a great battaile together. And at the last the dragon spit out of his mouth as it had beene well an hundred dragons; and lightly all the small dragons slew the old dragon and teare him all to peeces. And anon forthwith there came an old man into the hall, and hee sat him downe in a faire chaire, and there seemed to bee two great adders about his neck. And then the old man had an harpe, and there he sung an old song, how Joseph of Aramathy come into this land; and when he had sung, the old man bad sir Bors to goe from thence, for heere shall ye have no moe adventures, and full worshipfully have yee done, and better shall ye doe hereafter. And then sir Bors seemed that there came the whitest dove that ever he saw, with a little golden sencer in her mouth, and anon therewithall the tempest seased and passed that before was mervailous to heere. So was

[1] *Quarels.*—Quarrels were, properly, the arrows discharged from crossbows.

al the court ful of good savors. Then sir Bors saw foure faire children that bare foure tapers, and an old man in the midest of the children with a sencer in his one hand, and a speare in his other hand; and that same spear was called the speare of vengeance.

CHAP. VI.—How sir Bors departed, and how sir Launcelot was rebuked of queene Guenever, and of his excuse.

NOW," said that old man unto sir Bors, "goe ye unto your cosin sir Lancelot, and tell him of this adventure, the which had beene most convenient for him of all earthly knights, but sinne is so foule in him that hee may not achieve such holy deedes; for had not beene his sinne he had passed all the knights that ever was in his dayes. And tell thou sir Launcelot that of all worldly adventures hee passeth in manhood and prowesse all other, but in these spiritual matters hee shal have many his better." And then sir Bors saw foure gentlewomen comming by him poorely beseene; and hee saw where as they entred into a chamber where was great light, as it were a summer light, and the women kneeled downe before an alter of silver with foure pillowes, and as it had beene a bishop kneeling downe before that table of silver; and as sir Bors looked over his head, he saw a sword like silver, naked, hoving over his head; and the cleerenesse thereof smote so in his eyes that at that time sir Bors was blind, and there he heard a voyce that said, "Goe thou hence, thou sir Bors, for as yet thou art not worthie to bee in this place." And then hee went backeward to his bed till on the morrow. And on the morrow king Pelles made great joy of sir Bors, and then hee departed and rode to Camelot, and there hee found sir Launcelot du Lake, and told him of the adventures that he had seene with king Pelles at Corbin.

So the noyse sprang in king Arthurs court that sir

Lancelot had gotten a child upon faire Elaine the daughter of king Pelles; wherefore queene Guenever was wroth, and gave many rebukes unto sir Launcelot, and called him false knight. And then sir Launcelot told the queene all, and how hee was made to lye by her, by enchantment in likenesse of the queen; so the queene held sir Launcelot excused. And, as the booke saith, king Arthur had beene in France, and had made warre upon the mighty king Claudas, and had wonne much of his lands; and when the king was come againe, he let crie a great feast, that all lords and ladies of England should be there, but if it were such as were rebellious against him.

CHAP. VII.—How dame Elaine, Galahads mother, came in great estate unto Camelot, and how sir Launcelot behaved him there.

AND when dame Elaine the daughter of king Pelles hard of this feast, she sent unto her father and required him that hee would give her leave for to ride unto that feast. The king answered, "I will well that yee goe thither, but in any wise, as ye love me and will have my blessing, that ye bee well beseen in the richest wise; and look that ye spare for no cost; ask, and yee shall have all that you needeth." Then, by the advise of dame Brisen her maid, all thing was apparraled unto the purpose, and there was never no lady more richly beseen then shee was. So shee rode with twentie knights and ten ladies and gentlewomen to the number of an hundred horses. And when shee came to Camelot, king Arthur and queene Guenever said, and all the knights, that dame Elaine was the fairest and the best beseene lady that ever was in that court. And anon as king Arthur wist that shee was come, hee met her and saluted her, and so did the most part of al the knights of the round table, both sir Tristram, sir Bleoberis, and sir Gawaine, and many moe that I will not rehearse. But

when sir Launcelot saw her, hee was sore ashamed, and that because hee drew his sword on the morrow when hee had lyen by her, that hee would not see her nor yet speake to her; and yet sir Launcelot thought shee was the fairest woman that hee saw in his life daies. But when dame Elaine saw that sir Launcelot would not speake to her, shee was so heavy that she wend her heart would have brast; for wit yee well that out of measure shee loved him. And then dame Elaine said unto her gentlewoman dame Brisen, "The unkindnesse of sir Launcelot neere hand sleith me." "A! peace, madame," said dame Brisen, "I wil undertake that this night he shall lye with you, and yee would hold you still." "That were me lever," said dame Elaine, "then all the gold that is above the earth." "Let me deale," said dame Brisen. So when dame Elaine was brought unto queene Guenever, either made other good cheare by countenance, but nothing with hearts. But all men and women speake of the beautie of dame Elaine, and of her great riches. Then at night the queene commanded that dame Elaine should sleepe in a chamber nigh unto her chamber, and all under one roofe; and so it was done as the queene had commanded. Then the queene sent for sir Launcelot, and bad him come to her chamber that night, "or else I am sure," said the queen, "that ye will go to your ladies bed dame Elaine, by whom ye gate Galahad." "A! madame," said sir Launcelot, "never say yee so; for that I did was against my will." "Then," said the queene, "looke that yee come to me when I send for you." "Madame," said sir Launcelot, "I shall not faile you, but I shall bee ready at your command." This bargaine was not so soone done and made betweene them, but dame Brisen knew it by her crafts, and told it to her lady dame Elaine. "Alas," said shee, "how shall I doe?" "Let me deale," said dame Brisen, "for I shall bring him by the hand even unto your bed, and he shall weene that I am queene Guenevers messenger." "Now well is me," said

dame Elaine, "for of all the world I love none so much as I doe sir Launcelot."

CHAP. VIII.—How dame Brisen by enchantment[1] brought sir Launcelot to dame Elaines bed, and how queene Guenever rebuked him.

SO when the time came that all the folke were abed, dame Brisen came unto sir Launcelots bed side and said, "Sir Launcelot du Lake, be ye asleepe? my lady queene Guenever lyeth and waiteth upon you." "O faire lady," said sir Launcelot, "I am ready to goe with you where ye will have mee." So sir Launcelot threw upon him a long gowne,[2] and tooke his sword in his hand, and then dame Brisen tooke him by the finger and led him unto her ladies bed dame Elaine; and then shee departed and left them in the bed together. Wit yee well the lady was glad; and so was sir Launcelot, for hee wend that hee had another in his armes. Now leaven we them kissing and cliping, as it was a kindly[3] thing, and speake wee of queene Guenever, that sent one of her gentlewomen unto sir Launcelots bed. And when shee came there, she found sir Launcelots bed cold, and he was away; so she came againe unto the queene, and told her all how shee had speed. "Alas," said the queene, "where is that knight become?" Then the queene was nigh out of her wit, and then she writhed and weltred as a mad woman, and might not sleepe a foure or five houres. Then sir

[1] *By enchantment.*—The enchantment employed in this adventure does not appear of a very abstruse kind; but the term appears to be sometimes employed in a very general sense to signify any trick or deceit.

[2] *A long gowne.*—It may perhaps be well to remark that it was the custom to go to bed quite naked, so that any one rising to leave his or her bed in the night required some covering. This custom is frequently alluded to in our early writers. However, a few lines further on, Lancelot is spoken of as sleeping in his shirt.

[3] *Kindly.*—Natural.

Launcelot had a condition that hee used of custome hee would clatter in his sleepe and speeke oft of his lady queene Guenever. So sir Launcelot had waked so long as it had pleased him; then by course of kind hee slept and dame Elaine both, and in his slepe hee talked and clattered as a jay of the love that had beene betweene queene Guenever and him. And so as hee talked so lowd, the queene heard him there as she lay in her chamber; and when shee heard him so clatter, shee was nigh wood and out of her mind, and for anger and paine wist not what to doe; and then she coughed so loud that sir Launcelot awaked, and he knew her hemming. And then hee knew well that hee lay not by the queene; and therwith he lept out of his bed, as hee had beene a wood man, in his shirt. And the queene met him in the floore, and thus she said, "False traitour knight that thou art, looke thou never abide in my court, and avoid my chamber, and not so hardy, thou false traitour knight that thou art, that ever thou come in my sight." "Alas!" said sir Launcelot, and therwith hee tooke such a heartily sorrow at her words that he fell downe to the floore in a swond. And therewith queen Guenever departed. And when sir Launcelot awaked of his swond, hee lept out at a bay window into a gardin, and ther with thornes he was all to-scratched in his visage and his body; and so hee ran forth hee wist not whether, and was wild wood as ever was man. And so he ranne two yeares, and never man might have grace to know him.

CHAP. IX.—How dame Elaine was commanded by queen Guenever for to avoide the court, and how sir Launcelot became mad.

OW turne we unto queene Guenever and unto dame Elaine. Then when dame Elaine heard queene Guenever so rebuke sir Launcelot, and also she saw how he sownded, and after lept out of a bay window, then she said unto queene Guenever,

"Madame, ye are greatly to blame for sir Launcelot, for now ye have lost him, for I saw and heard by his countenance that he is mad for ever. Alas, madame, yee doe great sinne, and to your selfe great dishonour, for yee have a lord of your owne, and therefore it is your part for to love him above all other. For ther is no queene in all this world that hath such an other king as yee have; and if it were not, I might have the love of my lord sir Launcelot. And a cause I have to love him, for hee hath my maidenhead, and by him I have borne a fayre sonne, and his name is Galahad, and hee shall be in his time the best knight in the world." "I warne and charge you, dame Elaine," said the queene, "that when it is day light to avoide my court; and for the love yee owe to sir Launcelot, discover not your counsell, for and ye doe it will be his death." "As for that," said dame Elaine, "I dare undertake he is marred for ever, and that have yee made, for yee nor I are not like to rejoyce[1] him; for hee made the most piteous grone when hee lept out at yonder bay window that ever I heard man make. Alas!" said faire Elaine. "Alas!" said queene Guenever, "for now I wot well wee have lost him for ever." So on the morrow dame Elaine tooke her leave to depart, and shee would no longer abide. Then king Arthur brought her on her way with moe then an hundred knights through a great forrest. And by the way shee told sir Bors de Ganis all how it betide that same night, and how sir Launcelot lept out at a bay window extraught[2] out of his wit. "Alas!" said sir Bors; "where is my lord sir Launcelot become?" "Sir," said dame Elaine, "I cannot tell you." "Alas!" said sir Bors, "betweene you both yee have destroyed that good knight." "As for me," said dame Elaine, "I said never nor did never thing that should in any wise displease him; but with the great rebuke that queene

[1] *Rejoyce.*—Enjoy.

[2] *Extraught.*—Appears to be here used for *distraught*, or distracted. Caxton has *araged.*

Guenever gave him, I saw him sowne to the ground, and when he awake hee tooke his sword in his hand, naked save the shirt, and lept out at a window with the sorrowfullest grone that ever I hard any man make." "Now fare well, dame Elaine," said sir Bors, "and hold my lord king Arthur with a tale as long as ye may, for I will turne againe unto queene Guenever and give her an heat; and I require you, as yee will have my service, make good watch and espie if yee may see my lord sir Launcelot." "Truly," said dame Elaine, "I will doe all that I may, for as faine would I know where hee is become as you or any of his kinne, or as queene Guenever; and a good cause I have thereto as well as any other. And wit yee well," said dame Elaine to sir Bors, "I would leese my life for him rather then he should be hurt. But, alas! I feare me that I shall never se him; and the chiefe causer of all this is dame Guenever." "Madame," said dame Brisen, (the which had made the enchantment before betweene sir Launcelot and her,) "I pray you heartely let sir Bors depart and hie him with all his might as fast as he may to seeke sir Launcelot, for I warne you he is cleane out of his mind, and yet hee shall be wel holpen, and but by miracle." Then wept dame Elaine, and so did sir Bors de Ganis; and so they departed, and sir Bors rode straight unto queene Guenever. And when she saw sir Bors, shee began to weepe as shee had beene wood. "Fie upon your weeping!" said sir Bors, "for ye weepe never but when there is no boote. Alas!" said sir Bors, "that ever sir Launcelots kinne saw you; for now have ye lost the best knight of all our blood, and he that was the leader of us all and our succour; and I dare well say and make it good, that all kings, christen nor heathen, may not find such a knight, for to speake of his nobleness and curtesie with his beauty and gentlenesse. Alas!" said sir Bors, "what shall we doe that be of his blood?" "Alas!" said sir Ector de Maris. "Alas!" said sir Lionell.

CHAP. X.—What sorrow queene Guenever made for sir Launcelot, and how he was sought by knights of his kinne.

AND when the queene heard them say so, shee fell to the ground in a deadly sound; and then sir Bors tooke her, and dawed her, and when shee was come to her selfe againe shee kneeled afore the three knights,[1] and held up both her hands, and besought them to seeke him and not to spare for no goods but that he be found, "for I wot well he is out of his minde." And sir Bors, sir Ector, sir Lyonell departed from the queene, for they might not abide no longer for sorrow: and then the queen sent them treasure enough for their expences, and so they tooke their horses and their armour and departed. And then they rode from countrey to countrey, in forrests and in wildernesses and in wayes,[2] and ever they laid watch as wel both at forrests and at all maner of men as they rode, to harken and to enquire after him, as he that was a naked man in his shirt, with a sword in his hand. And thus they rode well nigh a quarter of a yeare, endlong and overthwart, in many places, forrests and wildernesses, and oftentimes were evill lodged for his sake, and yet for all their labour and seeking could they never here word of him. And wit ye well these three knights were passing sorry. So then at the last sir Bors and his fellowes met with a knight that hight sir Melion de Tartare. "Now, faire knight," said sir Bors, "whether be ye going?" for they knew either other afore time. "Sir," said sir Melion, "I am in the way toward the court of king Arthur." "Then we pray you," said sir Bors, "that yee will tell my lord king Arthur, and my lady queene Guenever, and all the fellowship of the round table, that we cannot in

[1] *The three knights.*—Caxton has, *and thenne syr Bors took her up, and dawed her, and whanne she was awaked she kneled afore the thre knyghtes.* The printer of the later edition evidently did not know the meaning of the word *dawed*, i. e. roused.

[2] *Wayes.*—*Wastes*, Caxton.

no wise here tell where sir Launcelot is become." Then sir Melion departed from them, and said that he would tel the king and the queene and all the fellowship of the round table as they had desired him. So when sir Melion was come unto the court of king Arthur, hee told the king and the queene, and all the fellowship of the round table, what sir Bors had said of sir Lancelot. Then sir Gawaine, sir Ewaine, sir Sagramore le Desirous, sir Aglovale, and sir Percivale de Galis tooke upon them by the great desire of king Arthur, and in especiall by the queen, to seek throughout all England, Wales, and Scotland, to find sir Launcelot; and with them rode eighteene knights moe to beare them fellowship. And wit ye well that they lacked no maner of spending; and so were they twenty-three knights. Now returne we unto sir Lancelot, and speake we of his care and woe, and what paine that he endured, for cold, hunger, and thirst he had plenty. And thus as these noble knights rode together, they by one assent departed asunder, and then they rode by two, by three, by foure, and by five; and ever they assigned where they should meete. And so sir Aglovale and sir Percivale rode together unto their mother, which was a queene in those dayes; and when shee saw her two sonnes, for joy shee wept right tenderly, and then she said unto them, "Ah, my deare sonnes, when your father was slaine he left me foure sonnes, of the which now bee two slaine, and for the death of my noble sonne sir Lamorake shall my heart never bee glad." And then she kneeled downe upon both her knees before sir Aglovale and sir Percivale, and besought them to abide at home with her. "Ah, sweete mother," said sir Percivale, "we may not abide here, for we bee come of kings blood on both parties, and therefore, mother, it is our kind to hunt at armes and noble deedes." "Alas, my sweete sonnes," said she, "for your sakes I shall leese my likeing and lust, and wind and weather I may not endure, what for the death of your father king Pellinore, that was shamefully slaine by the

hands of sir Gawaine and his brother sir Gaheris, and they slew him not manfully, but by treason; and, my deare sonnes, this is a pitteous complaint for mee of your fathers death, considering also the death of sir Lamorake, which of knighthood had but few fellowes. Now, my deare sonnes, have this in your minds." Then there was great weeping and sobing in the court when they should depart, and shee fell down in a sownd in the midest of the court.

CHAP. XI.—How a servant of sir Aglovales was slaine, and what vengeance sir Aglovale and sir Percivale did therefore.

AS soone as shee came againe to her selfe, she sent a squire after them with spending enough for them; and when the squire had overtook them, they would not suffer him to ride with them, but sent him home againe to comfort their mother, praying her meekely of her blessing. And so this squire was benighted, and by misfortune hee hapned to come unto a castle where dwelled a baron, and so when the squire was come into the castle the lord asked him from whence hee came and whom he served. "My lord," said the squire, "I serve a good knight that is called sir Aglovale." The squire said it to a good entent, weening unto him to have beene the more forborne for sir Aglovales sake, then that he had answered hee had served the queene sir Aglovales mother. "Well, my fellow," said the lord of that castle, "for sir Aglovales sake thou shalt have an evill lodging, for Aglovale slew my brother, and therefore thou shalt die on part of payment." And then the lord commanded his men to have him out of the castle, and there they slew him out of mercy. Right so on the morrow came sir Aglovale and sir Percivale riding by a church-yard, where men and women were busie, and beheld the dead squire, and thought to bury him. "What is there," said sir Aglovale, "that ye behold so fast?" A good man start

forth and said, "Faire knight, here lyeth a squire slaine shamefully this night." "How was he slaine, faire fellow?" said sir Aglovale. "My faire sir," said the man, "the lord of this castle lodged this squire this night, and because hee said hee was servant unto a good knight that is with king Arthur, his name is sir Aglovale, therefore the lord commanded to slay him, and for this cause he is slaine." "Gramercy," said sir Aglovale, "and lightly shall yee see his death revenged, for I am the same knight for whom this squire was slaine." Then sir Aglovale called unto him sir Percivale, and bad him alight quickly; and so they alighted both, and so they went on foote into the castle. And as soone as they were within the castle gate, sir Aglovale bad the porter goe into his lord "and tell him that I am sir Aglovale, for whom this squire was slaine this night." Anon the porter told this unto his lord, whose name was sir Goodwin, and anon he armed him, and then he came into the court, and said, "Which of you is sir Aglovale?" "Here am I," said sir Aglovale. "For what cause," said sir Aglovale, "slewest thou this night my mothers squire?" "I slew him," said sir Goodwin, "because of thee; thou slewest my brother sir Gawdelyn." "As for thy brother," said sir Aglovale, "I avow it I slew him, for he was a false knight, and a betrayer of ladies and of good knights; and for the death of my squire thou shalt die." "I defie thee," said sir Goodwin. And then they lashed together as egerly as it had beene two wild lyons; and sir Percivale fought with all the remnant that would fight, and so within a while sir Percivale had slaine all that would withstand him, for sir Percivale dealed so his strookes that were so rude that there durst no man abide him. And within a little while sir Aglovale had downe sir Goodwin to the earth, and there hee unlaced his helme, and strooke off his head. And then they departed, and tooke their horses; and then they let carry the dead squire unto a priory, and there they buried him.

CHAP. XII.—How sir Percivale departed secretly from his brother, and how hee loosed a knight bound with a chaine, and of other things.

AND when this was done, they rode into many countreys, ever enquiring after sir Launcelot, but in no wise they could here of him. And at the last they came to a castle hight Cardican,[1] and there sir Percivale and sir Aglovale were lodged together; and prively about midnight sir Percivale came to sir Aglovales squier and said, "Arise, and make thee ready, for thou and I will ride away secretly." "Sir," said the squier, "I would faine ride with you where yee would have mee, but and my lord your brother take me, he will sley me." "As for that, care thou not," said sir Percivale, "for I shall bee thy warrant." And so they rode till it was after noone, and then they came upon a bridge of stone, and there hee found a knight that was bound with a chaine fast about the wast unto a piller of marble. "O faire knight," said that bound knight, "I requier thee loose mee of my bands." "What knight are yee?" said sir Percivale; "and for what cause are yee so bound?" "Sir, I shall tell you," said that knight; "I am a knight of the round table, and my name is sir Persides, and thus by adventure I came this way, and here I lodged in this castle at the bridge foote, and therein dwelleth an uncurteous lady, and because she proffered me to be my paramour, and that I refused her, shee set her men upon mee sodainly or that I might come to my weapon, and thus they bound me, and heere I wot well I shall die, but if some man of worship breake my bands." "Bee yee of good cheare," said sir Percivale, "and because yee are a knight of the round table as well as I, I trust to God to breake your bands." And therewith sir Percivale drew out his sword, and strooke at the chaine with such a might that hee cut atwo the chaine and

[1] *Cardican.*—I suppose meant for Cardigan.

went through sir Persides hawberke, and hurt him a little. "O Jesu," said sir Persides, "that was a mightie strooke as ever I felt, for had not the chaine beene yee had slaine me." And therewithall sir Persides saw a knight comming out of the castle all that he might flying. "Beware," said sir Persides, "yonder commeth a man that will have to doe with you." "Let him come," said sir Percivale. And so he met with that knight in the midest of the bridge, and sir Percivale gave him such a buffet that hee smote him quite from his horse and over a part of the bridge, that had not beene a little vessell underneth the bridge, that knight had been drowned. And then sir Percivale tooke the knights horse, and made sir Persides to mount upon him; and so they rode unto the castle, and bad the lady deliver sir Persides servants, or else he would sley all that he might find; and so for feare shee delivered them all. Then was sir Percivale ware of a lady that stood in a toure. "A! madame," said sir Percivale, "what use and custome is that in a lady, for to destroy good knights but if they will bee your paramour! Forsooth it is a shamefull custome of a lady; and if that I had not a great matter in hand I should fordoe[1] your evill customes." And so sir Persides brought sir Percivale unto his owne castle; and there hee made him the best cheare that he could devise all that night. And on the morrow, when sir Percivale had heard masse and broken his fast, hee bad sir Persides "ride unto king Arthur, and tell the king how yee mette with me, and tell my brother sir Aglovale how I resceewd you; and bid my brother that he seeke not after me, for tell him that I am in the quest for to seeke sir Launcelot du Lake, and though hee seeke mee, he shall not find me, and tell him that I will never see him nor the court till I have found sir Launcelot. Also tell sir Kay the seneshall and sir Mordred, that I trust unto Jesu to bee of as great worthynesse as either of them; for tell them that I shal never forget

[1] *Fordoe.*—Destroy; abolish.

their mocks and scornes that they did to me that day when I was made knight, and tell them that I will never see that court till men speake of me more worship then ever man did of any of them both." And sir Persides departed from sir Percivale, and then hee rode unto king Arthur, and told there of sir Percivale; and when sir Aglovale heard him speake of his brother sir Percivale, he said, "Hee departed from me unkindly."

CHAP. XIII.—How sir Percivale met with sir Ector, and how they fought long together, and how they had almost slaine each other.

IR," said sir Persides, "on my life hee shall prove a noble knight as any is now living." And when hee saw sir Kay and sir Mordred, sir Persides said thus, "My faire lords both, sir Percivale greeteth you well both, and he sendeth you word by me, that he trusteth unto God or ever hee commeth to the court againe to be of as great noblenesse as ever ye were both, and moe men to speak of his noblenesse then ever did of yours." "It may well be," said sir Kay and sir Mordred, "but at that time when he was made knight he was full unlikely to prove a good knight." "As for that," said king Arthur, "he must needs prove a good knight, for his father and his brethren were noble knights." Now will we returne unto sir Percivale, that rode long, and in a forrest he met a knight with a broken shielde and a broken helme, and as soone as either saw other readily, they made them ready to just, and so hurled together with all the might of their horses, and met together so hard that sir Percivale was smitten to the earth. And then sir Percivale arose lightly, and cast his shield upon his shoulder, and drew his sword, and bad the other knight alight and doe battaile to the uttermost. "Will yee more?" said the knight; and therwith he alighted, and put his horse from him, and then they came together an easie pace, and there they lashed toge-

ther with their swords, and sometime they stroke, and somtime they foined, and either gave other many great wounds. Thus they fought neere halfe a day, and never rested them but little; and there was none of them both that had lesse wounds then fifteen, and they bled so much that it was mervaile that they stoode upon their feete. But this knight that fought with sir Percivale was a proved knight and a well fighting, and sir Percivale was young and strong, not knowing in fighting as the other was. Then sir Percivale spake first and said, "Sir knight, hold thy hand a littell while still, for we have fought for a simple matter and quarrell over long, and therefore I requier thee of gentlenesse tell me thy name, for I was never or this time matched." "So God me helpe," said the other knight, "and never before this time was there never no manner of knight the which wounded and hurt me so dangerously as thou hast done, and yet have I fought in many battailes; and now shalt thou wit that I am a knight of the round table, and my name is sir Ector de Maris, brother unto the good knight sir Launcelot du Lake." "Alas!" said sir Percivale, "and my name is sir Percivale de Galis, that have made my quest for to seeke sir Launcelot, now am I seker that I shal never finish my quest, for yee have slaine me." "It is not so," said sir Ector, "for I am slaine by your hands, and may not live; therfore I require you," said sir Ector unto sir Percivale, "ride yee here by unto a priorie, and bring me a priest that I may receive my Saviour, for I may not live; and when yee come unto the court of king Arthur, tell not my brother sir Launcelot how yee have slaine me, for then he will bee your mortall enemy, but yee may say that I was slaine in my quest as I sought him." "Alas!" said sir Percivale, "ye say that thing that never will be, for I am so faint for bleeding that, unlesse I may stand, how should I then take my horse?"

CHAP. XIV.—How by miracle they were both made whole by the comming of the holy vessell of the sancgreall.

THEN they made both great dole out of measure. "This will not availe," said sir Percivale; and then he kneeled downe and made his praiers devoutly unto Allmightie God, for hee was one of the best knights of the world that was at that time, in whome the very faith stood most in. Right so there came by the holy vessell of the sancgreall with all maner of sweetnesse and savour, but they could not readily see who beare that holy vessell; but sir Percivale had a glimmering of that vessell, and of the maiden that beare it, for hee was a perfect cleane maide. And foorthwith they were both as whole of limme and hide as ever they were in their life dayes, wherefore they gave thankes unto Almightie God right devoutly. "O Jesu," said sir Percivale, "what may this meane that wee bee thus healed, and right now we were at the point of dying?" "I wot well," said sir Ector, "what it is; it is an holy vessell that is borne by a maiden, and therin is a part of the holy blood[1] of our Lord Jesus Christ, blessed might hee bee; but it may not bee sene," said sir Ector, "but if he bee by a perfect man." "So God me helpe," said sir Percivale, "I saw a damosell, as me thought, all in whit with a vessell in both her hands, and foorthwithall I was whole." So then they tooke their horses and their harneis, and amended it as well as they might that was broken; and so they mounted upon their horses, and rode talking together, and there sir Ector told

[1] *Holy blood.*—Joseph of Arimathæa is pretended to have preserved in the St. Graal some of the blood of Christ, which he had received in it on the occasion of the burial of the Saviour. It may be remarked that the similarity in sound between *Saint Greal* and *Sang réal* (the real blood) has led to considerable confusion among old and modern writers; and it has been supposed by some that the real blood, and not the sacred dish, was the object of "quest" to king Arthur's knights.

sir Percivale how hee had sought his brother sir Launcelot, and never could have knowledge of him; "in many strange adventures have I been in this quest;" and so either tould other of their adventures.

CHAX. XV.—How sir Launcelot in his madnes tooke a sword, and fought with a knight, and after lept in a bed.

ND now leave we a little of sir Ector and sir Percivale, and speake wee of sir Launcelot, that suffered and endured many sharpe showers, which ever ranne wild wood from place to place, and lived by fruit and such as he might get, and dranke water two yeare; and other clothing had he but little, save his shert and his breach. And thus, as sir Launcelot wandred heere and there, hee came into a faire medow where he found a pavilion, and there upon a tree hung a whit shield, and two swords hung therby, and two speares there leaned against a tree; and when sir Launcelot saw the swords, anon hee lept to the one sword and tooke it in his hand and drew it out, and then hee lashed at the shield that all the medow range of the dints that he gave with such a noyse as ten knights had fought together. Then there came foorth a dwarfe, and lept unto sir Launcelot, and would have had the sword out of his hand; and then sir Launcelot took him by both the shoulders and threw him to the ground upon his necke, that hee had almost broken his necke; and therwithall the dwarfe cried for helpe. Then came forth a likely knight and well apparalled in scarlet, furred with meniver.[1] And anon as he saw sir Launcelot, he deemed that hee should be out of his wit, and then he said with faire speech, "Good friend, lay downe that sword, for, as me seemeth, thou hast more neede to sleepe, and of warme cloathes then to weld that sword." "As for that," said sir Launcelot, "come thou not nigh

[1] *Meniver.*—More usually spelt *minever*, a species of fur, much valued in the Middle Ages.

mee, for, and thou doe, wit thou well I will slay thee." And when the knight of the pavilion saw that, he start backward within the pavilion. And then the dwarfe armed him lightly, and so the knight thought by force and might to take the sword from sir Launcelot; and so he came steping out. And when sir Launcelot saw him come all armed with his sword in his hand, sir Launcelot flew unto him with such a might, and hit him upon the helme such a buffet, that the strooke troubled his braines; and therwith the sword brake in three, and the knight fell to the ground as though he had beene dead, the blood brasting out at his mouth, nose and eares. And then sir Launcelot ranne into the pavilion, and there he crept into the warme bed; and in that bed there was a lady, and lightly shee gat her smocke, and ranne out of the pavilion. And when shee saw her lord lye on the ground, like to be dead, then shee cried and wept as though she had beene mad. Then with her noyse the knight awaked out of his sowne, and looked up quickly with his eyes; and then hee asked her where the mad man was that had given him such a buffet, for "such a buffet had I never of mans hand." "Sir," said the dwarfe, "it is no worship to hurt him, for hee is a man out of his wit, and doubt ye not he hath beene a man of great worship, and for some hartely sorrow that he hath taken he is fallen mad; and me seemeth," said the dwarfe, "that hee resembleth much unto sir Launcelot du Lake, for him I saw at the great turnement beside Lonazep." "Jesu defend," said that knight, "that ever the noble knight sir Launcelot should be in such a plight! but whatsoever he be," said that knight, "harme will I none doe him." And this knights name was sir Bliaunt. Then he said unto the dwarfe, "Goe thou in all hast on horsebacke unto my brother sir Seliaunt that is at the Castle Blanche,[1] and tell him

[1] *Castle Blanche.*—A White-castle stood near Llandilo, in Monmouthshire; but it is here probably a mere castle of romance. Caxton reads *Syr Selyvaunt*, here and in the next chapter.

of mine adventure, and bid him bring with him an horse-litter, and then will we beare this knight unto my castle."

CHAP. XVI.—How sir Launcelot was caried in a horse litter, and how sir Lancelot rescewed sir Bliaunt his host.

SO the dwarfe rode fast, and came againe, and brought sir Seliaunt with him, and sixe men with an horselitter; and so they took up the fetherbed with sir Launcelot, and so carryed al with them to the Castle Blanche, and he never wakned untill hee was within the castle; and then they bound his hands and his feet, and gave him good meates and good drinks, and brought him againe to his strength and his fairenesse; but in his wit they could not bring him againe, nor to know himselfe. Thus sir Launcelot was there more then a yeare and a halfe, honestly arrayed and faire faren withall. Then upon a day this lord of that castle, sir Bliaunt, tooke his armes on horsebacke with a speare to seeke adventures, and as hee rode in a forrest there met him two knights adventurous; the one was sir Breuse saunce Pittie, and his brother sir Bertlot. And these two ranne both at once upon sir Bliaunt, and brake both their speares upon his body, and then they drew out their swords and made a great battaile and fought long together; but at the last sir Bliaunt was sore wounded, and felt himselfe faint, and then he fled on horsebacke toward his castle. And as they came hurling under the castle, where sir Launcelot lay in a window and saw two knights laid upon sir Bliaunt with their swords, and when sir Launcelot saw that, yet as wood as hee was, hee was sorry for his lord sir Bliaunt; and then sir Launcelot brake his chaines from his leggs and from his armes, and in the breaking he hurt both his hands. And so sir Launcelot ranne out at a posterne, and there he met with the two knights that chaced sir Bliaunt, and there hee pulled downe Bertlot with his bare hands

from his horse, and therewithall hee writhed his sword out of his hands, and so hee lept unto sir Breuse, and gave him such a buffet upon the head that he tumbled backward over his horse croupe. And when sir Bertlot saw his brother have such a fal, he gat a spear in his hand, and would have run sir Launcelot through. That saw sir Bliaunt, and strooke off the hand of sir Bertlot; and then sir Breuse and sir Bertlot gat their horses and fled away. When sir Seliaunt came and saw what sir Launcelot had done for his brother, then he thanked God, and so did his brother, that ever they did him any good. But when sir Bliaunt saw that sir Launcelot was hurt with the breaking of his chaines, then hee was sorry that he had bound him. "Bind him no more," said sir Seliaunt, "for hee is happie and gracious." Then they made great joy of sir Launcelot, and they bound him no more; and so he abode there halfe a yeare and more. And in a morning early sir Launcelot was ware where came a great boore, with many hounds nigh him; but the boore was so big that there might no hounds teare him, and the hunters came after blowing their hornes both on horseback and on foote; and at the last sir Launcelot was ware where on of them alighted and tied his horse to a tree, and leaned his speare against the tree.

CHAP. XVII.—How sir Launcelot fought against a boore and slew him, and how he was hurt, and after brought unto an hermitage.

SO came sir Launcelot and found the horse bound to a tree, and a speare leaning against a tree, and a sword tied unto the saddle bow. And then sir Launcelot lept into the saddle, and gat that speare in his hand, and then hee rode after the boore; and then sir Launcelot was ware where the boore set his arsse unto a tree fast by an hermitage. Then sir Launcelot ranne at the boore with his speare; and therewith the boore turned him sodainely and rove out the lungs and the heart

of sir Launcelots horse; so sir Launcelot fell to the earth, and, or ever sir Launcelot might get from his horse, the boore rove him on the brawne of the thigh up to the huckle bone.[1] And then sir Launcelot was wroth, and up he gat him on his feete, and drew out his sword, and he smote off the boores head at one strooke; and therewith came out the hermit, and when he saw him have such a wound, then the hermit came unto sir Launcelot and bemoaned him, and would have had him unto his hermitage. But when sir Launcelot heard him speake, he was so wroth with his wound that he ranne upon the hermit to have slaine him; and then the hermit ranne away. And when sir Launcelot might not overtake him, hee threw his sword after him, for sir Launcelot might not no farther for bleeding. Then the hermit turned againe and asked sir Launcelot how he was hurt. "Fellow," said sir Launcelot, "this boore hath bitten me right sore." "Then come with me," said the hermit, "and I shall heale you." "Goe thy way," said sir Launcelot, "and deale not with mee." And then the hermit ranne his way fast, and in his way he met with a good knight with many men. "Sir," said the hermit, "here is fast by my place the goodliest man that ever I saw, and he is sore wounded with a boore, and yet hee hath slaine the boore; but well I wot," said the hermit, "and hee bee not holpen, that goodly man shall die of that wound, and that were full great pittie." Then that knight, at the desire of the hermit, gat a cart, and in that cart that knight put the boore and sir Launcelot, for sir Launcelot was so feeble that they might right easely deale with him. And so sir Launcelot was brought to the hermitage, and the hermit healed him of his wound; but the hermit might not finde sir Launcelot sustenance, and so he empaired and waxed feeble both of his body and of his wit for default of sustenance, and waxed more wooder then he was aforehand. And then upon a day sir Launcelot ranne his way into the

[1] *Huckle-bone.—The hough-bone,* Caxton. The hip-bone.

forrest; and by adventure came into the cittie of Corbin, where dame Elaine was, that had borne Galahad, sir Launcelots sonne. And so when hee was entred into the towne, he ranne through the towne to the castle; and then all the young men of the cittie ranne after sir Launcelot, and there they threw turves at him and gave him many sad strooks; and as sir Launcelot might reach any of them, he threw them so that they would never more come in his hands, for of some he brake their leggs and some their armes, and so fled into the castle. And then came out knights and squires for to rescew sir Launcelot, and when they beheld him and looked upon his person, they thought they saw never so goodly a man; and when they saw so many wounds upon him, they all deemed that hee had beene a man of worship. And then they ordained cloathes unto his body, and straw underneth him, and a little house, and then every day they would throw him meate, and set him drink, but there were few or non that would bring meate to his hands.

CHAP. XVIII.—How sir Launcelot was knowen by dame Elaine, and how he was borne into a chamber, and after healed by the holy sanegreal.

SO it befell that king Pelles had a nephew whose name was Castor, and he desired of the king his uncle for to be made knight; and so at the request of this Castor, the king made him knight at the feast of Candlemasse. And when Castor was made knight, that same day he gave many gownes;[1] and so sir Castor sent for the foole, that was sir Launcelot, and when hee was come afore sir Castor, hee gave sir Launcelot a robe of scarlet and all that belonged unto him. And when sir Launcelot was arayed like a knight, he was the seem-

[1] *Many gownes.*—The practice of distributing robes as rewards or prizes at the great festivals of the feudal chiefs was very common, and is frequently alluded to in the old writers.

liest man in all the court, and none so well made. So when hee saw his time, hee went into the garden, and there sir Launcelot laid him downe by a well and slept. And so at after-noone dame Elaine and her maidens came into the garden for to play them; and as they romed up and downe, one of dame Elaines maidens espied where lay a goodly man by the well sleeping, and anon shewed him unto dame Elaine. "Peace," said dame Elaine, "say no word;" and then she brought dame Elaine where as he lay. And when dame Elaine beheld, anon shee fell in remembrance of him, and knew him verily for sir Launcelot, and therewith she fell on weeping so heartily that shee sanke downe to the ground; and when she had wept a great while, then she arose and called her maidens, and said she was sicke. And so she went out of the garden, and went straight unto her father, and there she tooke him apart by himselfe, and then shee said, "Oh, father, now have I neede of your helpe, and but if that yee helpe mee, fare-well my good dayes for ever." "What is that, daughter?" said king Pelles. "Sir," said she, "thus it is: in your garden I went for to sport me, and there by the well I found sir Launcelot du Lake sleeping." "I may not beleve it," said king Pelles. "Sir," said she, "truly he is ther, and me seemeth that hee should bee destraught out of his wit." "Then hold you still," said king Pelles, "and let me deale." Then the king called unto him such as hee most trusted, a foure persons and dame Elaine his daughter; and when they came to the well, and beheld sir Launcelot, anon dame Brisen knew him. "Sir," said dame Brisen, "wee must be wise and ware how wee deale with him, for this knight is out of his mind, and if that we awake him rudely, what hee will doe we all know not; but yee shall abide, and I shall throw such an enchantment upon him, that hee shall not awake within the space of an houre." And so shee did. Then, within a little while after, king Pelles commanded that all the people should avoide, that none should bee in that way there as

the king should come. And so when all this was done, these foure men and these ladies laid hand upon sir Launcelot, and so they beare him into a toure, and so into the chamber where as was the holy vessell of sanegreal, and by force sir Launcelot was laide by that holy vessell; and then there came an holy man and uncovered the vessell, and so by myracle, and by vertue of that holy vessell, sir Launcelot was all healed and recovered. And when hee was awaked, hee groned, and sighed sore, and complained greatly that hee was passing sore.

CHAP. XIX.—How sir Launcelot, after that he was whole and had his minde, he was ashamed, and how dame Elaine desired a castle for him.

AND when sir Launcelot saw king Pelles and dame Elaine, he waxed ashamed, and thus hee said, "O good Lord Jesu, how came I heere? for Gods sake, my lord, let me wit how I came here." "Sir," said dame Elaine, "into this countrey yee came like a mad man all out of your wit, and heere yee have beene kept as a foole, and no creature heere knew what yee weere till that by fortune a maide of mine brought mee unto you where as yee lay sleeping by a well side, and anon as I verily beheld you I knew you; and then I told my father, and so yee were brought before this holy vessell, and by the vertue of it thus were yee healed." "O Jesu, mercy!" said sir Launcelot, "if this bee sooth, how many be there that know of my woodnesse?" "So God mee helpe," said dame Elaine, "no moe but my father and I and dame Brisen." "Now for Christs love," said sir Launcelot, "keepe it secret and let no man know it in the world, for I am sore ashamed that I have beene thus miscaried, for I am banished out of the countrey of Logris for ever, that is to say, out of the countrey of England." And so sir Launcelot lay more then a fourtnight or ever hee might

stir for sorenesse. And then upon a day hee said unto dame Elaine these words, "Faire lady Elaine, for your sake I have had much travaile, care, and anguish, I neede not to rehearse it, yee know well how; notwithstanding, I know well that I have done foule to you when I drew my sword upon you for to have slaine you on the morrow when I had laine with you; and all was the cause that yee and dame Brisen made mee to lye by you maugre my head, and, as yee say, that night Galahad your sonne was gotten." "That is truth," said dame Elaine. "Now will yee, for my love," said sir Launcelot, "goe unto your father and get me a place of him wherein I may dwell, for in the court of king Arthur may I never come." "Sir," said dame Elaine, "I will live and dye with you, and onely for your sake; if my life might not availe you, and that my death might availe you, wit yee well I would dye for your sake; and I will goe to my father, and I am sure there is nothing that I can desire of him but I shall have it; and where yee bee, my lord sir Launcelot, doubt yee not but I will bee with you with all the service that I may do." So foorthwith shee went unto her father, and said, "Sir, my lord sir Launcelot desireth to bee heere by you in some castle of yours." "Wel, daughter," said the king, "sith it is his desire to abide in these marches, hee shall bee in the castle of Bliaunt, and there shall yee bee with him, and twentie of the fairest ladies that be in this countrey, and they shall bee of the greatest blood, and also yee shall have ten knights with you; for, daughter, I will that yee wit wee all bee honoured by the blood of the noble knight sir Launcelot."

CHAP. XX.—How sir Launcelot came into Joyous-ile, and there he named himselfe Le chevaller mal-fet.

THEN went dame Elaine unto sir Launcelot, and told him al how her father had devised for him and her. Then came the knight sir Castor (that was nephew unto king Pelles) unto sir Launcelot, and asked him what was his name. "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "my name is Le chevaller mall-fet." That is as much to say, the knight that hath trespassed. "Sir," said sir Castor, "it may well bee so, but mee seemeth that your name should be sir Launcelot du Lake, for or now I have seene you." "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "yee are not as a gentle knight; I put case my name were sir Launcelot, and that it list mee not to discover my name, what should it grieve you to keepe my counsaile, and yee not hurt thereby? But wit yee well, and ever it lye in my power I shall grieve you, and that I promise you truely." Then sir Castor kneeled downe and asked sir Launcelot mercy, "for I shall never utter what yee bee as long as yee bee in these partes." Then sir Launcelot pardoned him. And then after this, king Pelles, with ten knights, and dame Elaine, and twentie ladies, rode unto the castle of Bliaunt, that stood in an iland enclosed with iron, with a faire water deepe and large; and when they were there, sir Launcelot let call it the Joyous-ile, and there hee was called none otherwise but Le chevaller mall-fet, the knight that hath trespassed. Then sir Launcelot let make him a shield all of sabels, and a queene crowned in the middest all of silver, and a knight cleane armed kneeling before her, and every day once, for any mirths that all the ladies might make him, hee would looke towards the realme of Logris, where as king Arthur and queene Guenever were; and then would hee fall on a weeping as though his heart should all to-breake. So it beefell that time that sir Launcelot heard of a justing fast

by his castle, within sixe mile.[1] Then he called unto him a dwarfe, and bad him "goe unto that justing, and, or ever the knights depart, look that thou make there a crie, in hearing of all the knights that bee there, that there is a good knight in Joyous-ile, that is the castle Bliaunt, and say that his name is Le chevaller mall-fet, that will just against all knights that will come; and who that putteth that knight to the worse, shall have a faire maiden and a jarfawcon."

CHAP. XXI.—Of a great turneiment in the Joyous-ile, and how sir Percivale fought with him.

SO when this crie was made, unto Joyous-ile drew many knights, to the number of five hundred, and wit yee well that there was never seene in king Arthurs daies one knight that did such deeds of armes as sir Launcelot did three dayes together, for hee had the better hand of five hundred knights, and yet there was none slaine of them. And after that sir Launcelot made them all a great feast. And in the meane while came sir Percivale de Galis and sir Ector de Maris under the castle that was called the Joyous-ile; and so, as they beheld that faire castle, they would have gone into it, but they might not for the broad water, and bridge could they none find. Then they saw on that other side a lady with a sparhawke upon her hand, and sir Percivale called unto her, and asked her who was within that castle. "Faire knight," said the lady, "heere within this castle is the fairest lady in this land, and her name is dame Elaine; also we have in this castle the fairest knight, and the mightest man that is (I dare well say) now living, and he calleth himselfe Le chevaller mall-fet." "How came hee into this marches?" said sir Percivale. "Truely," said the damosell, "hee came into this countrey like a mad man, with dogs and boyes chacing him throughout the citie of Corbin; and by the holy vessell of the sancgreall hee was

[1] *Sixe mile.—Within thre leghes,* Caxton.

brought into his wit againe, but hee will not doe battaile with no knight but by underne[1] or by noone. And if yee list to come into the castle," said the damosell, "yee must ride unto the further side of the castle, and there shall yee find a vessell that shall beare you and your horses." Then they departed, and came unto the vessell, and then sir Percivale alighted and said unto sir Ector de Maris: "Yee shall abide me heere, untill I know what manner of knight hee is, for it were a great shame unto us, in as much as hee is but one knight, and wee should both doe battaile with him." "Doe as yee list," said sir Ector de Maris, "here shall I abide you untill that I heere of you againe." Then sir Percivale passed the water; and when hee came unto the castle gate, he said to the porter, "Goe thou unto the good knight within the castle, and tell him that heere is come an arraunt knight to just with him." "Sir," said the porter, "ride yee within the castle, and there shall yee find a common place for justing, that lords and ladies may behold you." So anon as sir Launcelot had warning, he was soone ready. And there sir Percivale and sir Launcelot encountred with such a might, and their speares were so rude, that both the horses and the knights fell to the ground. And then they avoided their horses, and drew out their swords, and hewed away cantels of their shields, and hurled together with their shields like two wild boores, and either wounded other passing sore. And at the last sir Percivale spake first, when they had fought more then two houres. "Faire knight," said sir Percivale, "I require thee tell me thy name, for I met never with such a knight as yee are." "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "my name is Le chevaller mall-fet. Now tell me your name," said sir Launcelot, "I require you as yee are a gentle knight." "Truely," said sir Percivale, "my name is sir Percivale de Galis, which is brother unto the good knight sir Lamoracke de Galis, and king Pellinore was our father, and sir Aglavale is my brother." "Alas!" said sir Lancelot, "what have I don,

[1] *By underne.*—See before, p. 6.

to fight with you that are a knight of the round table, that sometime was your fellow in king Arthurs court?"

CHAP. XXII.—How each of them knew other, and of their great courtesie, and how his brother sir Ector came unto him, and of their joy.

AND therewithall sir Launcelot kneeled downe upon his knees, and threw away his shield and his sword from him. When sir Percivale saw him doe so, hee mervailed what hee meaned, and thus hee said unto him, "Sir knight, whatsoever thou bee, I require thee, upon the high order of knighthood, tell mee your right name." Then sir Launcelot answered and said, "So God me help, my name is sir Launcelot du Lake, king Bans sonne of Benwicke." "Alas!" said sir Percivale, "what thing have I done? I was sent by queene Guenever for to seeke you, and so I have sought you nigh this two yeare; and yonder is sir Ector de Maris, your brother, abideth me on the other side of the water. Now, sir, I pray you for Gods sake," said sir Percivale, "forgive me mine offence that I have here done." "It is soone forgiven," said sir Launcelot. Then sir Percivale sent for sir Ector de Maris, and when sir Launcelot had a sight of him, hee ranne unto him and took him in his armes; and then sir Ector kneeled downe, and either wept upon other that all had great pitty to behold them. Then came dame Elaine, and there she made them the greatest cheere that she could devise, and there shee told sir Ector and sir Percivale how and in what manner sir Launcelot came into that countrey, and how hee was there healed. And there it was knowen how long sir Launcelot was with sir Bliaunt and with sir Selivant, and how hee first met with them, and how hee departed from them because of a boore, and how the heremite healed sir Launcelot of his great wound, and how that hee came to Corbin.

CHAP. XXIII.—How sir Bors and sir Lionell came to king Brandegore, and how sir Bors tooke his sonne Heline le Blanke, and of sir Launcelot.

NOW leave wee sir Launcelot in Joyous-ile, with the faire lady dame Elaine, and sir Percivale and sir Ector playing with them, and returne we unto sir Bors de Ganis and sir Lionel, which had sought sir Launcelot nigh by the space of two yeare, and never could they heare of him. And so as they rode thus by adventure they came unto the house of king Brandegore, and there sir Bors was well knowen, for he had gotten a child of the kings daughter fifteene yeare before, and his name was Helaine le Blanke. And when sir Bors saw that child, it liketh him passing wel, and so those two knights had good cheere of king Brandegore. And on the morrow after sir Bors came afore king Brandegore, and said, "Heere is my sonne Helaine le Blancke, that as it is said hee is my sonne, and sith it is so, I will that yee wit I will have him with me unto king Arthurs court." "Sir," said the king, "ye may well take him with you, but hee is over tender of age." "As for that," said sir Bors, "I will have him with mee and bring him unto the house of most worship of the world." So when sir Bors should depart, there was made great sorrow for the departing of Helaine le Blancke, and great weeping was there made. But sir Bors and sir Lionell departed; and within short space after their departing they came to Camelot, where as at that time was king Arthur; and when king Arthur understood that Helaine le Blancke was sir Bors son and nephew unto king Brandegore, then king Arthur let make him knight of the round table, and so he proved a good knight and an adventurous.

Now will wee turne unto our matter of sir Launcelot. It befel upon a day sir Ector and sir Percivale came unto sir Launcelot, and asked him what he would doe, and whether

hee would goe with them unto king Arthur or not. "Nay," said sir Launcelot, "that may not be by no meanes, for I was so evill intreated at the court, that I cast me never to come there more." "Sir," said sir Ector, "I am your owne brother, and ye are the man in the world that I love most, and, if I understood that it were your disworship, yee may right well understand that I would never counsaile you thereto; but king Arthur and all his knights, and in especiall queene Guenever, made such dole and sorrow that it was marvaile to heare and see. And yee must remember the great worship and renowne that yee bee of, how that yee have beene more spoken of then any other knight that is now living, for there is none that beareth the name now but yee and sir Tristram. Therefore, brother," said sir Ector, "make you ready to ride unto the court with us, and I dare well say there was never knight better welcome unto the court then yee. And I wot well and can make it good," said sir Ector, "it hath cost my lady the queene twentie thousand pound the seeking of you." "Well, brother," said sir Launcelot, "I will doe after your counsell and ride with you." So then they tooke their horses, and made them ready, and tooke their leave of king Pelles and of dame Elaine; and when sir Lancelot should depart, dame Elaine made great sorrow. "My lord sir Launcelot," said dame Elaine, "at this same feast of Pentecost shall your sonne and mine, Galahad, be made knight, for he is full fifteene winters old."[1] "Do as yee list," said sir Launcelot, "God give him grace to prove a good knight." "As for that," said dame Elaine, "I doubt not but hee will prove the best man of his kinne, except one." "Then shall he be a man good enough," said sir Launcelot.

[1] *Fifteen winters old.*—Fifteen appears to be an early age for receiving the dignity of knighthood, but everything is exaggerated in this particular cycle of romances.

CHAP. XXIV.—How sir Launcelot with sir Percivale and sir Ector came to the court, and of the great joy of him.

THEN they departed, and within five dayes journey they came to Camelot,[1] which is called, in English, Winchester. And when sir Launcelot was come among them, the king and all the knights made great joy of him; and there sir Percivale de Galis and sir Ector de Maris began to tell of all the adventures, how sir Launcelot had beene out of his mind all the time of his absence, how he called himself Le chevaller mal-fet, as much to say the knight that had trespassed, and in three dayes sir Launcelot smote downe five hundred knights. And ever as sir Ector and sir Percivale told these tales of sir Launcelot, queene Guenever wept as shee would have died; then afterward the queen made great joy. "Oh, Jesu!" said king Arthur, "I marvaile for what cause yee, sir Launcelot, went out of your mind? I and many other deemed that it was for the love of faire Elaine, the daughter of king Pelles, by whom it is noysed that ye have gotten a child, and his name is Galahad, and men say he shall doe mervailes." "My lord," said sir Launcelot, "if I did any folly, I have found that I sought." And so the king held him still, and spake no more; but al sir Launcelots kin knew for whom he went out of his mind. And then there were great feasts made and great joy, and many great lords and ladies, when they heard that sir Launcelot was come to the court againe, made great joy.

CHAP. XXV.—How La beale Isoud counselled sir Tristram to goe unto the court at the great feast of Pentecost.

NOW will wee leave off this matter, and speake we of sir Tristram and of sir Palomides, that was the Sarasin unchristned. When sir Tristram was come home unto Joyous-gard from

[1] *Camelot . . . Winchester.*—See former notes, vol. i. pp. 59 and 90.

his adventures, and this while that sir Launcelot was mist two yeare and more, sir Tristram beare the renowne through all the realme of Logris, and many strange adventures befell him, and full well and manly and worshipfully he brought them to an end. So when hee was come home, La beale Isoud told him of the great feast that should be at Pentecost next following, and there she told him how sir Launcelot had beene mist two yeare and more, and that while hee had beene out of his mind, and how he was holpen by the holy vessel of the sancgreall. "Alas!" said sir Tristram, "that caused some debate betweene him and queene Guenever." "Sir," said La beale Isoud, "I know it all, for queene Guenever sent me a letter, in the which shee wrote mee all how it was, for to require you to seeke him. And now, blessed bee God," said La beale Isoud, "hee is whole and sound, and come againe unto the court." "Thereof am I glad," said sir Tristram, "and now shall ye and I make us ready; for both ye and I will be at the feast." "Sir," said La beale Isoud, "and it please you I will not be there, for through me ye are marked of many good knights, and that causeth you to have much more labour for my sake then needeth you." "Then will I not be there," said sir Tristram, "but if yee be there." "God defend," said La beale Isoud, "for then shall I bee spoken of shame among all queenes and ladies of estate, for yee which are called one of the noblest knights of the world, and ye a knight of the round table, how may yee bee mist at that feast. What shall be said among the knights? Se how sir Tristram hunteth and hawketh, and courteth[1] within the castle with his lady, and forsaketh his worship. Alas! shall some say, it is pittie that ever he was made knight, or that ever he should have the love of a lady. Also, what shall queenes and ladies say of me? It is pitie that I have my life, that I wil hold so noble a knight as yee are from your worship." "So God me helpe," said sir Tristram

[1] *Courteth.—Coureth,* Caxton.

to La beale Isoud, "it is passing wel said of you, and nobly counselled. And now I well understand that yee love me, and like as yee have counselled me, I will doe apart thereafter; but there shall no man nor child ride with mee but my selfe alone. And so will I ride on Tewesday next comming, and no harneis of warre but my spear and my sword."

CHAP. XXVI.—How sir Tristram departed unarmed, and met with sir Palomides, and how they smote each other, and how sir Palomides forbeare him.

AND so when the day came, sir Tristram took his leave of his lady La beale Isoud, and shee sent with him foure knights, and within halfe a mile hee sent them againe. And within a mile after, sir Tristram saw before him where sir Palomides had stricken downe a knight, and had almost wounded him to death. Then sir Tristram repented him that he was not armed, and then hee hoved still. With that sir Palomides knew sir Tristram, and cried on high: "Sir Tristram, now be wee met, for or wee depart we will redresse our old sores." "As for that," said sir Tristram, "there was never yet christian man that might make his boast that ever I fled from him, and wit thou well, sir Palomides, thou that art a Sarasin shall never make thy boast that sir Tristram de Liones shall flee from thee." And therewithall sir Tristram made his horse to run with all his might, came he straight upon sir Palomides, and brake his speare upon him in an hundred peeces, and forthwith sir Tristram drew his sword, and then he turned his horse and strooke at sir Palomides sixe great strookes upon his helme. And then sir Palomides stood still, and beheld sir Tristram, and marvailed of his woodnesse and of his great folly; and then sir Palomides said to himselfe, "And sir Tristram were armed, it were hard to cease him of this battaile, and if I turne againe and slay him, I am shamed wheresoever that I goe." Then

sir Tristram spake, and said: "Thou coward knight, what castest thou to doe? Why will thou not doe battaile with mee? for have thou no doubt I shall endure all thy malice." "Ah! sir Tristram," said sir Palomides, "full well thou wotest I may not fight with the for shame, for thou art heere naked and I am armed, and if I sley thee, the dishonour shall be mine. And well wotest thou," said sir Palomides to sir Tristram, "that I know thy strength and thy hardinesse to endure against a good knight." "That is truth," said sir Tristram, "I understand well thy valiantnesse." "Yee say well," said sir Palomides, "now I require you tell me a question that I shall aske you." "Tel me what it is," said sir Tristram, "and I shall answere you the truth as God mee helpe." "I put the case," said sir Palomides, "that ye were armed at all points as well as I am, and I naked as ye be, what would ye doe to me now, by your true knighthood?" "Ah!" said sir Tristram, "now I understand thee well, sir Palomides, for now I must say mine owne judgement, and as God me blisse that shall I say shall not be said for feare that I have of thee, but this is all. Wit thou well, sir Palomides, as at this time thou shouldest depart from me, for I would not have to doe with thee." "No more will I," said sir Palomides, "and therfore ride forth on thy way." "As for that, I may choose," said sir Tristram, "either to ride or to abide. But sir Palomides," said sir Tristram, "I marvaile of one thing, that thou art so good a knight, that thou wilt not be christned, and thy brother sir Safire is christned."

CHAP. XXVII.—How that sir Tristram gat him harnis of a knight which was sore hurt, and how he overthrew sir Palomides.

S for that," said sir Palomides, "I may not yet be christned, for one avow which I have made many yeares agoe, how bee it in my heart I beleeve in Jesu Christ and his milde mother Mary, but I have but one battaile to doe, and when that is

done, I will be christned with a good will." "By my head," said sir Tristram, "as for one battaile, thou shalt seeke it no longer. For God defend," said sir Tristram, "that through my default thou shouldest any longer live thus a Sarasin; for yonder is a knight which ye, sir Palomides, have hurt and smitten downe. Now helpe mee that I were armed in his armour, and I shall soone fullfill thine avowes." "As yee will," said sir Palomides, "so shall it bee." So they rode both unto that knight, that sat on a bancke, and then sir Tristram saluted him, and he full weakly saluted him againe. "Sir," said sir Tristram, "I require you that ye will tell me your name." "Sir," said he, "my name is sir Galleron of Galway, and am a knight of the round table." "So God me helpe!" said sir Tristram, "I am right heavie for your hurts; but this is all, I must pray you to lend me all your whole armour, for yee see that I am unarmed, and I must doe battaile with this knight." "Sir," said the hurt knight, "yee shall have it with a right good will; but yee must be ware, for I warne you that knight is strong. Sir," said sir Galleron, "I require you tell me your name, and what is that knights name that hath beaten mee?" "Sir, as for my name, it is sir Tristram de Liones, and as for the knights name that hath hurt you, it is sir Palomides, brother unto the good knight sir Safire, and yet is sir Palomides unchristned." "Alas!" said sir Galleron, "that is pittie that so good a knight and so noble a man of armes should be unchristned." "So God me helpe!" said sir Tristram, "either hee shall sley mee or else I him, but that he shall be christned or we depart in sunder." "My lord sir Tristram," said sir Galleron, "your great renowne and worship is well knowne through many realmes, and God save you this day from shenship[1] and shame." Then sir Tristram unarmed sir Galleron, the which was a noble knight, and had done many deedes of armes, and he was a large knight of flesh and bone. And

[1] *Shenship.*—Disgrace; ruin. The edition of 1634 has *worship*, which makes nonsense of the phrase.

when hee was unarmed, hee stood upon his feete, for he was brused in the backe with a speare. Yet as well as sir Galleron might, he armed sir Tristram. And then sir Tristram mounted upon his owne horse, and in his hand he gat sir Gallerons speare. And therewithall sir Palomides was ready, and so they came hurling together, and either smote other in the middest of their shields, and therewithall sir Palomides speare brake, and sir Tristram smote downe the horse; and then sir Palomides as soone as he might avoided his horse, and dressed his shield and drew out his sword. That saw sir Tristram, and therwith he alighted and tied his horse to a tree.

CHAP. XXVIII.—How sir Tristram and sir Palomides fought long together, and after accorded; and how sir Tristram made him to be christned.

THEN they came together as two wild boores, lashing the on the other, tracing and traversing, like two noble men which oft had beene well proved in battaile; but alway sir Palomides dread the might of sir Tristram, and therfore he suffered him not to breath him. Thus they fought more then two houres; but often sir Tristram smote such strookes at sir Palomides that hee made him to kneele, and sir Palomides brake and cut away many peeces of sir Tristrams shield. And then sir Palomides wounded sir Tristram, for he was a well fighting man. Then sir Tristram was wroth out of measure, and then he rashed unto sir Palomides with such a might that sir Palomides fell groveling unto the ground, and therewithall he lept up lightly upon his feete; and then sir Tristram wounded sir Palomides passing sore through the shoulder. And allway sir Tristram fought still in like hard; and sir Palomides failed not, but gave him many sad strookes. And at the last sir Tristram doubled his strookes, and by fortune sir Tristram smote sir Palomides sword out

of his hand; and if sir Palomides had stooped for his sword, sir Tristram had slaine him. Then sir Palomides stood still, and beheld his sword with a full sorrowfull heart. "How now?" said sir Tristram unto sir Palomides; "now have I thee at avantage as thou hadst mee to day, but it shall never be said in no court, nor among no good knights, that sir Tristram shall slay any knight that is weaponlesse, therfore take thou thy sword and let us make an end of this battel." Then spake sir Palomides unto sir Tristram, "As for to doe this battaile, I dare right well end it; but I have no lust to fight any more, and for this cause," said sir Palomides, "the offence that I have done unto you is not so great but, and if it please you, wee may bee friends: all that I have offended is, and was, for the love of the queene La beale Isoud, king Markes wife. And as for her, I dare well say shee is perelesse above all other ladies, and also I proffered her never no dishonour; and by her and because of her I have gotten the most part of my worship; and siththence I offended never as to her owne person. And as for the offence which I have done, it was against your owne person; and for that offence ye have given mee this day many grievous and sad strookes, and some I have given you againe. And now I dare well say, I felt never no man of so great a might and strength, nor so well breathed, but if it were the noble knight sir Launcelot du Lake. Wherefore I require you, my lord sir Tristram, forgive mee all that I have offended unto you, and this day have me unto the next church, and first I will bee cleane confessed, and after that see you that I bee truly baptised; and then wee will ride al together unto the court of my lord king Arthur, so that wee may bee there at the feast of Pentecost." "Now take your horse," said sir Tristram, "and as ye have said, so shall it bee done, and all your evill will God forgive it you as I doe; and here within this mile is the suffrigan of Carleill, which shall give you the sacrament of baptisme." Then they tooke their

horses, and sir Galleron rode with them; and when they came afore the suffrigan, sir Tristram told him their desire. Then the suffrigan commanded to fill a great vessell with water; and when he had halowed it, hee then confessed cleane sir Palomides; and sir Tristram and sir Galleron were his godfathers. And then soone after they departed, riding toward Camelot, where the noble king Arthur and queene Guenever were keeping a court royall of the noble knights of the world; and for the most part all the knights of the round table were there at that time. And so the king and all the court were glad that sir Palomides was christned. And at the same feast in came sir Galahad and sat in the siege perilous; and so therewithall departed and disevered all the noble fellowship of knights of the round table, and sir Tristram returned againe toward Joyousgard: and sir Palomides followed after the questing beast.[1]

CHAP. XXIX.—How at the vigill of the feast of Pentecost, entred into the hall before king Arthur a damosell, and desired sir Launcelot for to come and dub a knight, and how he went with her.

AT the vigill of Pentecost, when all the fellowship of the round table were come unto Camelot, and there they all heard their service, and all the tables were covered, ready to set thereon the meate, right so entered into the hall a full faire gentlewoman on horsbacke, that had riden full fast, for her horse was all to-beswet; then shee there

[1] *The questing beast.*—This is the last mention of the questing, or glatisant beast; and we are left in the dark as to its subsequent history. It was first introduced to us as the object of pursuit to king Pellinore. See vol. i. pp. 44, 45. Elsewhere we are told that Palomides had made a vow not to be christened until he had achieved the pursuit of the questing beast. See vol. ii. p. 300. But that is not in accordance with what is said in the present chapter, and in other parts of the romance. Palomides himself now loses his interest, and is introduced for little more than to fill up lists of names in turnaments, &c.

alighted and came before king Arthur and saluted him; and then the king said, "Damosell, God blesse you!" "Sir," said shee, "for Gods sake, shew me where sir Launcelot is!" "Yonder may yee see him," said king Arthur. Then shee went unto sir Launcelot, and said, "Sir Launcelot, I salute you on king Pelles behalfe, and I require you to come with me heereby into a forrest." Then sir Launcelot asked her with whome that shee dwelled. "I dwell," said shee, "with king Pelles." "What is your will with me?" said sir Launcelot. "Yee shall know and understand," said she, "when ye come thether." "Well," said he, "I shall gladly goe with you." So sir Launcelot bad his squier to saddle his horse and bring his armour; and in all the hast he did his commandement. Then came the queene unto sir Launcelot, and said, "Will ye leave us at this high feast?" "Madame," said the gentlewoman, "wit yee well he shall be with you to morrow by dinner-time." "If I wist," said the queene, "that hee should not bee with us heere to morrow, hee should not goe with you by my good will." Right so departed sir Launcelot with the gentlewoman, and rode till they came into a forrest, and into a great valley, where he saw an abbey of nunnes; and there was a squier ready to open the gates. And so they entred in, and discended from their horses, and there came a faire fellowship about sir Launcelot, and welcomed him, and were passing glad of his comming; and then they led him into the abbesse chamber, and unarmed him. Right so hee was ware lying upon a bed two of his cosins, sir Bors and sir Lionell, and then he awaked them; and when they saw him they made great joy. "Sir," said sir Bors unto sir Launcelot, "what adventure hath brought you hether, for we wend to morrow to have found you at Camelot?" "So God me helpe," said sir Launcelot, "a gentlewoman hath brought me hether, but I know not the cause." In the meane while, as they stood thus talking together, there came in twelve nunnes, which brought with

them Galahad, the which was passing faire and well made, that unneth men in the world might not find his match; and all those ladies wept. "Sir," said the ladies, "wee bring here this child, the which we have nourished, and wee pray you for to make him a knight; for of a more worthier mans hand may hee not receive the order of knighthood." Sir Launcelot beheld that young squire, and saw hee was seemely and demure as a dove, with all manner of good fetures, that hee wend of his age never to have seene so faire a man of forme. Then said sir Launcelot, "Commeth this desire of himselfe?" Hee and all they said, "Yea." "Then shall hee," said sir Launcelot, "receive the high order of knighthood as to morrow at the reverence of the high feast." That night sir Launcelot had passing good cheere, and on the morrow at the houre of prime, at Galahads desire, he made him knight; and said, "God make him a good man, for beautie faileth him not as any that liveth."

CHAP. XXX.—How the letters were found written in the siege perilous, and of the mervailous adventure of the sword in a stone.

OW, faire sir," said sir Launcelot, "will ye come with me unto the court of my lord king Arthur?" "Nay," said hee, "I will not goe with you as at this time." Then he departed from them, and tooke his two cosins with him; and so they came unto Camelot by the houre of underne on Whitsunday. By that time the king and the queene were gone to the minster to heare their service. Then the king and the queene were passing glad of sir Bors and sir Lionell, and so was all the fellowship. So when the king and all the knights were come from the service, the barons spied in the sieges of the round table all about written with letters of gold, "here ought to set he," and "he ought to sit here:" and thus they went so long untill they came unto

the siege perilous, where they found letters newly written, of gold, that said, "Foure hundred winters and foure and fiftie accomplished after the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ ought this siege to be fulfilled." Then they all said, "This is a full mervailous thing, and an adventurous." "In the name of God," said sir Launcelot, and then hee accounted the tearme of the writing from the birth of our Lord unto that day; "it seemeth me," said sir Launcelot, "this siege ought to bee fulfilled this same day, for this is the feast of Pentecost after the 'foure hundred and foure and fiftie yeare,' and if it would please all parties, I would that none of these letters were seene this day, till hee bee come that ought to achive this adventure." Then made they for to ordeine a cloth of silke for to cover these letters in the siege perillous. Then the king bad hast unto dinner. "Sir," said sir Kay the steward,[1] "if yee goe now unto your meat, ye shall breake the old custome of your court; for yee have not used upon this day to sit at your meate or that yee have seene some adventure." "Yee say truth," said king Arthur, "but I had so great joy of sir Launcelot and of his cosins, which be come to the court whole and sound, that I bethought me not of mine old custome." So as they stood speaking, in came a squier and said unto the king, "Sir, I bring unto you mervailous tidings." "What be they?" said king Arthur. "Sir, there is heere beneath at the river a great stone which I saw fleete[2] above the water, and therin saw I a sword sticking." Then said the king, "I will see that mervaile." So all the knights went with him, and when they came unto the river, they found there a stone fleeting, as it had beene of red marble, and therein stuck a faire and a rich sword, and in the pomell thereof were precious stones, wrought with subtill letters of gold. Then the barons red the letters, which said in this wise, "Never shall man take mee hence, but onely hee by whom I ought to hang, and hee shall bee the best knight

[1] *The steward.—The seneschall,* Caxton. [2] *Fleete.*—Float.

of the world." When the king had seene these letters, he said unto sir Launcelot, "Fair sir, this sword ought to bee yours, for I am sure that yee bee the best knight of the world." Then sir Launcelot answered soberly, "Certainely, sir, it is not my sword. Also, sir, wit yee well I have no hardinesse to set my hand to it, for it belongeth not to hang by my side. Also, who assaieth for to take that sword, and faileth of it, hee shall receive a wound by that sword that hee shall not be whole long after. And I will that ye wit that this same day will the adventures of the sanegreall (that is called the holy vessell) begin."

CHAP. XXXI.—How sir Gawaine assaied to draw out the sword; and how an old man brought in sir Galahad.

NOW, my faire nephew," said the king unto sir Gawaine, "assay ye once for my love." "Sir," said hee, "save your grace, I shall not doe that." "Sir," said the king, "assay to take the sword at my command." "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "your command I will obey." And therwithal he took the sword by the handell, but he might not stir it. "I thanke you," said king Arthur unto sir Gawaine. "My lord sir Gawaine," said sir Launcelot, "now wit yee well this sword shall touch you so sore that ye shall will yee had never set your hand therto for the best castle of this realme." "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "I might not withstand mine uncles will and commandement." But when king Arthur heard this, he repented it much; and then hee bad sir Percivale that hee should assay for his love. And he said, "Gladly, for to beare sir Gawaine fellowship." And therewithall he set his hand upon the sword and drew at it strongly; but he might not once moove it. Then wer there no more that durst be so hardy to set their hands thereto. "Now may yee goe unto your dinner," said sir Kay unto king Arthur; "for a marvailous adventure have ye seene." So

he king and al his knights went unto the court; and every knight knew his owne place, and set them therein; and young men that were no knights[1] served them. So when they were served, and all the sieges fulfilled save onely the siege perilous, anon there befell a mervailous adventure, that all the doores and the windowes of the pallace shut by themselves, but for all that the hall was not greatly darked,[2] and therewith they were al abashed both one and other. Then king Arthur spake first, and said, "By God, faire fellowes and lords, we have seene this day mervailes, but or night I suppose we shall see greater mervailes." In the meane while came in a good old man and an ancient, clothed all in white; and there was no knight that knew from whence hee came. And with him hee brought a young knight, both on foote, in red armes, without sword or shield, save a scabbeard hanging by his side; and these words hee said, "Peace bee with you, faire lords." Then the old man said unto king Arthur, "Sir, I bring you heere a young knight that is of kings linage, and of the kindred of Joseph of Arimathy, whereby the mervailes of this court and of strang realmes shall be fully accomplished."

CHAP. XXXII.—How the old man brought sir Galahad unto the siege perillous and set him therein, and how all the knights mervailed therof.

THE king was right glad of his words, and said unto the good man, "Sir, yee bee right hartely wellcome, and the young knight with you." Then the old man made the young knight to unarme him; and hee was in a cote of red sendell, and beare a mantell upon his shoulder that was furred with fine

[1] *That were no knights.—That were knyghtes,* Caxton.

[2] *Not greatly darked.*—We are, of course, to suppose that the windows had shutters which closed.

ermines, and put that upon him. And the old man said unto the young knight, "Sir, follow after." And anon he brought him unto the siege perillous, where beside sate sir Launcelot. And the good old man lift up the cloth, and found there letters that said, "This is the siege of sir Galahad the good knight." "Sir," said the old man, "wit yee well this place is yours." And then hee set him downe surely in that siege. And then hee said to the old man, "Sir, yee may now goe your way, for yee have well done that yee were commanded to doe: and recommand mee unto my graundsire king Pelles and unto my lord Pechere, and say unto them on my behalfe, that I shall come and see them as soone as I may." So the good man departed, and there met him twentie noble squiers, and so they tooke their horses and went their way. Then all the knights of the round table mervailed them greatly of sir Galahad, that hee durst sit there in that siege perillous, and was so tender of age, and wist not from whence he came, but al onely by God, and said "This is he by whom the sancgreall shal be achieved, for there sat never none but hee but that hee were mischieved." Then sir Launcelot beheld his sonne, and had great joy of him. Then sir Bors told his fellowes, "Upon paine of my life, this young knight shall come unto great worship." This noyse was great in all the court, so that it came to the queene. Then shee had great mervaile what knight it might bee that durst adventure him to sit in the siege perilous. Many said unto the queene that hee resembled much unto sir Launcelot. "I may well suppose," said the queene, "that sir Launcelot begat him upon king Pelles daughter, by the which hee was made to lye by enchantment, and his name is sir Galahad; I would faine se him," said the queene, "for he must needes be a noble man, for so is his father that him begat, I report me unto all the knights of the round table." So when dinner was done, and that the king and all were risen, the king went unto the siege perilous and lift up the cloath, and found there the name of sir Galahad, and then

hee shewed it unto sir Gawaine, and said, "Faire nephew, now have wee among us sir Galahad the good knight that shall worship[1] us all, and upon paine of my life he shall achieve the sanegreall, as sir Launcelot hath done us to understand." Then came king Arthur unto sir Galahad, and said, "Sir, yee bee welcome, for yee shall moove many good knights unto the quest of the sanegreall, and ye shall achieve that never knight might bring to an end." Then the king tooke him by the hand, and went downe from the pallace to shew sir Galahad the adventure of the stone.

CHAP. XXXIII.—How king Arthur shewed the stone hoving on the water to sir Galahad, and how he drew out the sword.

THE queene heard thereof, and came after with many ladies, and shewed them the stone which hoved on the water. "Sir," said the king to sir Galahad, "here is a great mervaile as ever I saw, and right good knights have assayed and failed." "Sir," said sir Galahad, "that is no mervaile, for this adventure is not theirs but mine, and for the surety of this sword I brought none with mee, for here by my side hangeth the scabard." And anon he laid his hand on the sword, and lightly drew it out of the stone, and then he put it into the scabard, and said unto the king, "Now it goeth better then it did aforehand." "Sir," said the king then, "a shield God shall send unto you." "Now have I," said sir Galahad, "that sword that somtime was belonging unto the good knight sir Balin le Savage, and he was a passing good man of his hands, and with that sword he slew his brother Balan, and that was great pittie, for hee was a good knight, and either slew other through a dolorous strooke that sir Balan gave unto my grandfather king Pelles, the which is not yet whole, nor shall not bee till I heale him." Therewith the king and all other espied where came riding downe the river a lady on a white palfrey toward them, and she

[1] *Worship.*—Give us honour.

saluted the king and the queene, and asked if sir Launcelot was there. And then sir Launcelot answered himselfe, "I am here, faire lady." Then she said, all weeping, "Your great doings be changed sith to day in the morning." "Damosell, why say yee so?" said sir Launcelot. "I say you sooth," said the damosell, "for yee were this day the best knight in the world, but who should say so now, should be openly proved a lyer, for there is one better then ye, and well it is proved by the adventure of the sword, wherto ye durst not set your hand, and that is the change and leaving of your name; wherefore I make unto you a remembrance, that ye shall not weene from henceforth that ye bee the best knight of the world." "As touching that," said sir Launcelot, "I know wel I was never the best." "Yes," said the damosell, "that were ye, and yet are of any sinful man of the world; and, sir king, Nacien the hermit sendeth thee word that to thee shall befall the greatest worship that ever befell king in Brittaine, and I shall tell you wherefore, for this day the sanegreall appeared in this thy house, and fed thee and all thy fellowship of the round table." And so the damosell tooke her leave, and departed the same way that she came.

CHAP. XXXIV.—How king Arthur had all the knights together for to just in the medow beside Camelot or they departed.

OW," said the king, "I am sure, at this quest of the sanegreall, shall all ye of the round table depart, and never shal I see you againe whole together, therefore I will see you all whole together in the medow of Camelot, for to just and to turney, that after your death men may speake of it, that such good knights were wholy together such a day." And unto that counsaile and at the kings request they accorded all, and tooke on their hearneis that longed to justing. But all the meaning of the king was to see sir Galahad

proved, for the king deemed hee should not lightly come againe unto the court after his departing. So were they al assembled in the medow, both more and lesse. Then sir Galahad, by the prayer of the king and the queene, did upon him a noble jesserance,[1] and also hee did on his helmé, but shield would hee take none, for no praier of the king. And then sir Gawaine and other knights prayed him for to take a speare; and so hee did. And the queene was in a tower with all her ladies for to behold that turnement. There sir Galahad dressed him in the middest of the medow, and there he began to breake speares mervailously, that all men had wonder of him, for hee there surmounted and exceeded all other knights, for within a little while he had throwen downe many good knights of the round table, save twaine, that was sir Launcelot and sir Percivale.

CHAP. XXXV.—How the queene desired to see sir Galahad, and how after all the knights were replenished with the holy sanegreall, and how they avowed the enquest of the same.

HEN the king, at the queenes request, made him to alight and to unlace his helme, that queene Guenever might see him in the visage; and when she beheld him she said, "Soothly I dare well say that sir Launcelot begat him, for never two men resembled more in liknesse, therefore it is no mervaile, though hee bee of great prowesse." So a lady that stood by the queene said: "Madame, for Gods sake, ought hee of right to bee so good a knight?" "Yee, forsooth," said the queene, "for he is of all parties come of the best knights of the world, and of the highest linage, for sir Launcelot is come but of the eight degree from our Lord Jesus Christ, and sir Galahad is of the ninth degree from our Lord Jesu Christ, therefore I dare well say that they be the greatest gentlemen of all the world." And then the king and all the estate went home unto Camelot, and

[1] *Jesserance.*—A jacket of light plate armour. See vol. i. p. 17.

so went to even-song to the great minster; and so after that they went to supper, and every knight sat in their place as they were before hand. Then anon they heard cracking and crying of thunder, that hem thought the place should all to-rive; in the midst of the blast entred a sunne beame more clear by seaven times then ever they saw day, and all they were alighted of the grace of the holy Ghost. Then began every knight to behold other, and either saw other by their seeming fairer then ever they saw afore, not for then there was no knight that might speake any word a great while; and so they looked every man on other as they had beene dombe. Then there entred into the hall the holy grale covered with white samite, but there was none that might see it, nor who beare it, and there was all the hall fulfilled with good odours, and every knight had such meate and drinke as hee best loved in this world; and when the holy grale had beene borne through the hall, then the holy vessel departed sudenly, that they wist not where it became. Then had they breath to speak, and then the king yeelded thanks unto God of his grace that hee had sent them. "Certainely," said king Arthur, "wee ought greatly to thanke our Lord Jesu Christ for that hee hath shewed us this day at the reverence of this high feast of Pentecost." "Now," said sir Gawaine, "we have beene served this day of what meats and drinkes we thought on, but one thing beguiled us, we might not see the holy grale, it was so preciously covered, wherefore I will make heere avow, that to morrow, without any longer abiding, I shall labour in the quest of the sancgreall, that I shall hold me out a twelve moneths and a day, or more if neede bee, and never shal I returne againe unto the court til I have seene it more openly then it hath beene seene heere; and if I may not speed, I shall returne againe, as hee that may not bee against the will of our Lord Jesu Christ." When they of the round table heard sir Gawaine say so, they arose, the most part of them, and avowed the same. And anon, as

king Arthur heard this, he was greatly displeased, for hee wist wel that they might not gainesay their avowes. "Alas!" said king Arthur unto sir Gawaine, "yee have nigh slaine me with the vow and promise that yee have made; for through you yee have beereft mee of the fairest fellowship and the truest of knighthood that ever were seene together in any realme of the world. For when they shall depart from hence, I am sure that all shall never meete more in this world, for there shall many die in the quest, and so it forethinketh me a little; for I have loved them as well as my life, wherefore it shall grieve me right sore the seperation of this fellowship, for I have had an old custome to have them in my fellowship."

CHAP. XXXVI.—How great sorrow was made of the king and the queene and ladies for the departing of the knights, and how they departed.

AND therewith the teares fell into his eyes, and he said: "Sir Gawaine, sir Gawaine, yee have set me in great sorrow, for I have great doubt that my true fellowship shall never meete more heere againe." "A!" said sir Launcelot, "comfort your selfe, for it shall bee unto us as a great honour, and much more then if we died in any other places, for of death wee be sicker." "Ah, sir Launcelot," said the king, "the great love that I have had unto you all the dayes of my life maketh me to say such dolefull words, for never Christian king had never so many worthy men at his table as I have had this day at the round table, and that is to mee great sorrow." When the queene, ladies, and gentlewomen wist these tidings, they had such sorrow and heavinesse, that no tongue might tell it, for those knights had holden them in honour and charitie, but among all other, queene Guenever made great sorrow. "I mervaile," said shee, "my lord will suffer them to depart from him." Thus was all the court troubled, because those

knights should depart; and many of those ladies that loved knights would have gone with their lovers, and so had they done, had not an old knight come among them in religious clothing, and then he speake all on high, and said, "Faire lords that have sworne in the quest of the sanegreall, thus sendeth your Nacion the hermit word, that none in this quest lede lady nor gentlewoman with him, for it is not to do in so high a service as they labour in, for I warne you plaine hee that is not cleane out of sinne, hee shall not see the misteries of our Lord Jesu Christ." For this cause they left ther ladies and gentlewomen. After this the queene came unto sir Galahad, and asked him of whence hee was, and of what countrey; he told her of whence hee was, and son unto sir Launcelot shee said hee was; as to that hee said neither yee nor nay. "So God me helpe," said the queene, "of your father yee need not to shame you, for hee is the goodliest knight, and of the best men come, and of the sterne [1] of all parts of kings, and of so therefore yee ought of right to bee of your deeds a passing good man; and certainely," shee said, "yee resemble him much." Then was sir Galahad a little ashamed, and said unto the queene, "Madame, in as much yee know it of a certaintie, wherefore doe yee aske it mee? for hee that is my father shal be knowen openly, and all betimes." And then they went to rest them; and in the honour of the highnesse of sir Galahad, hee was led into king Arthurs chamber, and there he rested him in his owne bed; and as soone as it was day light the king arose, for hee had taken no rest of all that night for sorrow. Then went hee unto sir Gawaine and unto sir Launcelot, that were risen for to heere masse. And then king Arthur said againe, "Ah, sir Gawaine, sir Gawaine, yee have betraied me, for never shall my court bee amended by you, but yee will never be sory for me, as I am for you;" and therewith the teares began to runne downe by his visage. And therewith the king said, "Ah,

[1] *Sterne.*—Progeny, race, or descent. *Strene,* Caxton.

knight sir Launcelot, I require thee that thou wilt counsaile mee, for I would this quest were undone, and it might bee." "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "yee saw yester day so many worthy knights that then were sworne, that they may not leave it in no manner of wise." "That wot I well," said the king, "but it shall so heavy me at their departing, that I wot well that there shall no manner of joy remedy me." And then the king and the queene went to the minster. So anon sir Launcelot and sir Gawaine commanded their men to bring their armes; and when they were all armed save their shields and their helmes, then they came to their fellowship, which all were ready in the same wise for to goe to the minster to heere their service. Then after the service was done, the king would wit how many had taken the quest of the sancgreall, and to account them hee praied them all. Then found they by tale an hundred and fiftie, and all were knights of the round table; and then they put on their helmes and departed, and recommanded them all wholy unto the queene, and there was weeping and great sorrow. Then the queene departed into her chamber, so that no man should perceive her great sorrowes. When sir Launcelot missed the queene, hee went into her chamber, and when shee saw him, shee cried aloud, "O, sir Launcelot, ye have betraied me, and put mee to death, for to leave thus my lord." "A! madame," said sir Launcelot, "I pray you bee not displeased, for I shall come againe as soone as I may with my worship." "Alas!" said shee, "that ever I saw you! but hee that suffred death upon the crosse for all mankind, bee to you good conduct and safetie, and all the whole fellowship." Right so departed sir Launcelot, and found his fellowship that abod his comming; and so they mounted upon their horses and rode through the streetes of Camelot, and there was weeping of the rich and poore, and the king returned away, and might not speake for weeping. So within a while they came to a citie and a castle that hight Vagon; there

they entred into the castle; and the lord of that castle was an old man that hight Vagon, and hee was a good man of his living, and set open the gates, and made them all the good cheere that hee might. And so on the morrow they were al accorded that they should depart everyeach from other; and then they departed on the morrow with weeping and mourning cheere, and every knight tooke the way that him best liked.

CHAP. XXXVII.—How sir Galahad gat him a shield, and how they sped that presumed to take downe that shield.

OW rideth sir Galahad yet without shield; and so hee rode foure dayes without any adventure, and at the fourth day after even-song[1] hee came to a white abbey,[2] and there he was received with great reverence, and led to a chamber; and there hee was unarmed, and then was hee ware of two knights of the round table, one was king Bagdemagus, and that other was sir Uwaine. And when they saw him, they went unto him and made of him great solace, and so they went to supper. "Sirs," said sir Galahad, "what adventure brought you hither?" "Sir," said they, "it is told us that within this place is a shield that no man may beare about his necke but if that he be mischieved or dead within three daies, or else maimed for ever." "Ah, sir," said king Bagdemagus, "I shall beare it to morrow for to assay this strange adventure." "In the name of God," said sir Galahad. "Sir," said king Bagdemagus, "and I may not achive the adventure of this shield, yee shall take it upon you, for I am sure yee shall not faile." "Sir," said sir Galahad, "I agree right well thereto, for I have no shield." So on the morrow they arose and heard masse. Then king Bagde-

[1] *After even-song.*—Vespers or even-song began at four o'clock in the afternoon.

[2] *A white abbey.*—i. e. an abbey of white or Augustine monks.

magus asked where the advent urous shield was; anon a munke led him behind an alter, where the shield hung as white as any snow, but in the mids was a red crosse. "Sir," said the munke, "this shield ought not to be hanged about no knights necke, but hee bee the worthiest knight of the world, and therefore I counsaile you knights to bee well advised." "Well," said king Bagdemagus, "I wote well that I am not the best knight of the world, but yet shall I assay to beare it;" and so he beare it out of the ministery,[1] and then he said unto sir Galahad, "If it will please you, I pray you abide here still, till yee know how I shall speed." "I shall abide you heere," said sir Galahad. Then king Bagdemagus tooke with him a squier, the which should bring tidings unto sir Galahad how hee sped. Then when they had ridden a two mile, and came in a faire valey before an hermitage, then they saw a goodly knight come from that partie in white armour, horse and all, and hee came as fast as his horse might runne, with his speare in the rest, and king Bagdemagus dressed his speare against him, and brake it upon the white knight. But the other strooke him so hard, that hee brake the mayles, and thrust him through the right shoulder, for the shield covered him not as at that time, and so hee beare him from his horse; and therewith he alighted and tooke the white shield from him, saying, "Knight, thou hast done thy selfe great folly, for this shield ought not to bee borne but by him that shall have no peere that liveth." And then hee came to king Bagdemagus squier, and said, "Beare this shield unto the good knight sir Galahad that thou left in the abbey, and greete him well from mee." "Sir," said the squier, "what is your name?" "Take thou no heede of my name," said the knight, "for it is not for thee to know, nor none earthly man." "Now, faire sir," said the squier, "at the reverence of Jesu Christ, tell me for what cause this shield may not be borne, but if the bearer thereof be mischived?"

[1] *The ministery.*—The minster, or monastery.

"Now sith thou hast conjured me so," said the knight, "this shield behoveth to no man but unto sir Galahad." Then the squier went unto king Bagdemagus, and asked him whether he were sore wounded or not. "I am sore wounded," said he, "and full hardly I shall escape from the death." Then he fet[1] his horse, and brought him with great paine to an abbey; then was he taken downe softly, and unarmed, and laid in a bed, and his wound was looked unto, for hee lay there long, and escaped hard with his life.

CHAP. XXXVIII.—How sir Galahad departed with the shield, and how king Evelake had received the shield of Joseph of Aramathy.

IR Galahad," said the squier, "that knight that wounded king Bagdemagus sendeth you greeting, and bad that yee should beare this shield, wherethrough great adventures shall befall." "Now blessed bee God and fortune," said sir Galahad. And then hee asked his armour, and mounted upon his horse, and hung the white shield about his necke, and commended them to God. And sir Uwaine said he would beare him fellowship, if it pleased him. "Sir," said sir Galahad, "that may ye not, for I must go alone, save this squire that shall beare mee fellowship." And so departed sir Uwaine. Then within a while came sir Galahad there as the white knight abode him by the hermitage, and everyeach saluted other curteously. "Sir," said sir Galahad, "by this shield beene fall many mervailes." "Sir," said the knight, "it befell, after the passion of our lord Jesu Christ thirtie yeare, that Joseph of Aramathy, the gentle knight, that tooke downe our Lord from the crosse, and at that time hee departed from Jerusalem with a great part of his kindred with him, and so they laboured till they came to a citie that hight Sarras.[2] And at that same

[1] *Fet.*—Fetched.

[2] *Sarras.*—Maundevile gives the name Sarras to one of the great cities of Media, but I have thought it not impossible that it may here

houre that Joseph came unto Sarras, there was a king that hight[1] Evelake, that had great warre against the Sarasins, and in especiall against one Sarasin, the which was king Evelakes cosin, a rich king and a mighty, the which marched[2] nigh this land, and his name was called Tollome le Feintes. So upon a day these two met to doe battaile.

"Then Joseph, the son of Joseph of Aramathy, went unto king Evelake, and told him that he would be discomfited and slaine but if he left his beleeve of the ould law and beleeve upon the new law. And then he shewed him the right beleeve of the Holy Trinity, the which he agreed with al his hart, and ther this shield was made for king Evelak, in the name of him that died upon the crosse; and then through his good beleeve hee had the better of king Tollome. For when king Evelake was in the battaile, there was a cloath set afore the shield, and when he was in the greatest perill hee let put away the cloath, and then anon his enemies saw a figure of a man upon the crosse, wherethrough they were discomfited. And so it befell that a man of king Evelakes had his hand smitten off, and beare his hand in his other hand, and Joseph called that man unto him, and bad him goe with good devotion and touch the crosse; and as soone as that man had touched the crosse with his hand, it was as whole as ever it was before. Then soone after there fell a great mervaile, that the crosse of the shield at one time vanished away that no man wist where it became. And then was the king Evelake baptised, and for the most part all the people of that cittie. So soone after Joseph would depart, and king Evelake would go with him whether he would go or not; and so by fortune they came into this land, which at that time was called Great Brittaine, and there they found a great

be a corruption of Charræ, the Haran of Scripture, and that the legend of the St. Graal may have some connection with the Sabæan superstitions.

[1] *Hight.*—Was called. [2] *Marched.*—Bordered upon.

felon panim that put Joseph in prison. And so by fortune tidings came unto a worthy man that hight Mondrames, and hee assembled all his people, for the great renown that he had hard of Joseph; and so he came into the land of Great Britaine, and disherited this felon panim and consumed him, and therewith delivered Joseph out of prison. And after that, all the people were turned to the christian faith.

CHAP. XXXIX.—How Joseph made a crosse upon the white shield with his blood, and how sir Galahad was by a munke brought to a tombe.

NOT long after that, Joseph was laid in his death bed, and when king Evelake saw that, he mado great sorrow, and said: 'For thy love I have left my countrey, and sith thou shalt out of this world, leave mee some token that I may thinke on thee.' 'That will I doe right gladly,' said Joseph. 'Now bring me the shield that I tooke [1] you when yee went into the battaile against king Tollome.' Then Joseph bled sore at the nose that hee might not by no meanes bee stenched, and there upon that same shield he made a crosse of his owne blood, 'Now may yee see a remembrance that I love you, for yee shall never see this shield but that ye shall thinke on mee, and it shall be alwayes as fresh as it is now, and never shall no man beare this shield about his necke but hee shall repent it, unto the time that sir Galahad the good knight beare it, and the last of my linnage shall have it about his necke, the which shall do many mervailous deeds.' 'Now,' said king Evelake, 'where shall I put this shield that this worthy knight may have it?' 'Yee shall leave it there as Nacien the hermit shall bee put after his death, for thither shall the good knight come the fifteene day after that hee shall receive the order of knighthood, and so that

[1] *Tooke.*—Gave.

day that they set is this time that yee have his shield. And in the same abbey lyeth Nacien the hermit.'" And then the white knight vanished away. Anon as the squire had heard these words, he alighted from his hackney, and kneeled downe at sir Galahads feete, and besought him that hee might goe with him till that hee had made him knight. "If I would not refuse you, then will ye make me a knight?" said the squire; "and that high order, by the grace of God, shall be well set upon me." So sir Galahad graunted him, and then they returned againe unto the abbey that they came from, and there men made full great joy of sir Galahad. And anon as hee was alighted, there was a munke brought him unto a tombe in a church yard, where as was such a noyse, that who heard it should very nigh be mad or leese his strength. "And, sir," said he, "I deeme it is a feend."

CHAP. XL.—Of the mervaile that sir Galahad heard and saw in the tombe, and how he made Melias knight.

OW leade mee thither," said sir Galahad. And so they did, all armed save his helme. "Now," said the good man, "goe to the tombe, and lift it up." And so hee did, and heard a great noyse, and pittiously he said, that all men might heare it: "Sir Galahad, the servant of God, come thou not neere me, for thou shalt make me goe againe there where I have beene so long." But sir Galahad was nothing afraid, but quickly lift up the stone, and there came out a foule smoke, and after hee saw the foulest figure lept out thereof that ever hee saw in the likenesse of a man, and then hee blessed him, and wist well that it was a feend of hell. Then heard hee a voice, that said, "Galahad, I see there about thee so many angels that my power may not hurt thee." Right so sir Galahad saw a body all armed lye in the tombe, and beside him there lay a sword. "Now,

faire brother," said sir Galahad, "let us remove this cursed body, for it is not worthy to lye in the church yard, for hee was a false christian man." And therewith they all departed, and went to the abbey. And anon as hee was unarmed, a good man came and set him downe by him, and said, "Sir, I shall tell you what betokeneth all that ye saw. That covered body betokeneth the hardnesse of the world, and the great sinne that our Lord found in the world; for there was such wretchednesse, that the father loved not the sonne, nor the sonne loved not the father, and that was one of the causes that our Lord tooke flesh and blood of a cleane maiden; for our sinnes were so great at that time, that well nigh all was but wickednesse." "Truely," said sir Galahad, "I beleeve you right well." So sir Galahad rested him there all that night; and on the morrow he made the squire knight, and asked him his name, and of what kindred he was come. "Sir," said he, "men call me Melias de Lile, and I am the sonne of the king of Denmarke." "Now, faire sir," said sir Galahad, "sith yee bee come of kings and queenes, now looke that knighthood bee well set upon you, for ye ought to be a mirour unto all chivalry." "Sir," said Melias, "yee say sooth; but, sir, sith ye have made mee knight, ye must of right graunt me my first desire that is reasonable." "Ye say sooth," said sir Galahad. Then said sir Melias, "That ye will suffer me to ride with you in this quest of the sancgreall, till that some adventure depart us."

"I graunt you," said sir Galahad. Then men brought sir Melias his armour, and his speare, and his horse, and so sir Galahad and he rode forth all that weeke ere they found any adventure. And then upon a Munday in the morning, as they were departed from an abbey, they came unto a crosse which departed two waies, and on that crosse were letters written that said thus: "Now, yee knights arraunt, the which goeth for to seeke adventures, see here two waies, that one way defendeth thee that thou goe not

that way, for hee shall not goe out of that way againe, but if hee bee a good man and a worthy knight; and if thou goe on the left hand, thou shalt not there lightly win prowesse, for thou shalt in this way be soone assayed." "Sir," said sir Melias unto sir Galahad, "if it liketh you to suffer me for to take the way on the left hand, tell it me, for there I shall well prove my strength." "It were better," said sir Galahad, "that yee rode not that way, for I deeme I should better escape in that way then ye." "Nay, I pray you, my lord, let me have that adventure?" "Take it in Gods name," said sir Galahad.

CHAP. XLI.—Of the adventure that sir Melias had, and how sir Galahad revenged him, and how sir Melias was caried into an abbey.

AND then sir Melias roode into an old forrest, and therein he rode two daies and more, and then hee came into a faire medow, and there was a faire lodge of bowes; and then hee espied in that lodge a chaire wherein was a crowne of golde subtilly wrought, also there was clothes covered upon the earth, and many delitious meats were set thereon. Sir Melias beheld this adventure, and thought it mervailous; but hee had no hunger, but of the crowne of gold hee tooke much keepe, and therewith hee stouped downe and tooke it up and rode his way with it. And anon he saw a knight come riding after him, that said, "Knight, set downe that crowne which is not yours, and therfore defend you." Then sir Melias blessed him, and said, "Faire Lord of heaven, helpe and save thy new made knight." And then they let their horses runne as fast as they might, so that the other knight smote sir Melias through the hawberke and through the left side, that hee fell to the earth nigh dead. And then hee tooke the crowne and went his way, and sir Melias lay still and had no power to stirre.

In the meane while by fortune there came sir Galahad,

and found him there in perill of death, and then he said, "Ah! sir Melias, who hath wounded you? therfore it had beene better to have riden that other way." And when sir Melias heard him speake, hee said, "Sir, for Gods love, let me not die in this forrest, but beare me unto the abbey here beside, that I may be confessed and have my rights." "It shall be done," said sir Galahad; "but where is he that hath wounded you?" With that sir Galahad heard in the leaves cry on high, "Knight, keepe the from mee." "Ah! sir," said sir Melias, "beware, for that is hee that hath slaine me." Sir Galahad answered, "Sir knight, come on your perill." Then either dressed them to other, and came together as fast as their horses might runne, and sir Galahad smote him so that his speare went through his shoulder, and smote him downe of his horse, and in the falling sir Galahads speare brake. With that came out of the leaves another knight, and brake a speare upon sir Galahad or hee might turne him. And then sir Galahad drew out his sword, and smote off the left arme of him, so that it fell unto the ground, and then hee fled and sir Galahad followed fast after him. And then hee returned againe unto sir Melias, and there he alighted and dressed him softly upon his horse before him, for the trounchion of the speare was in his body; and sir Galahad start up behind him and held him in his armour, and so brought him to an abbey, and there he unarmed him and brought him to his chamber, and then hee asked his Saviour.[1] And when hee had receved him, hee said unto sir Galahad, "Sir, let death come when it pleaseth God." And therwith he drew out the tronchion of the speare out of his body, and then he sowned. Then came there an old monke, which sometime had beene a knight, and beheld sir Melias; and anon he ransacked[2] him, and hee said unto sir Galahad, "I shall heale him of his wound, by the grace of God, within the space of seven weekes." Then was sir Galahad glad, and unarmed him,

[1] *His Saviour.*—i. e. the sacrament. [2] *Ransacked.*—i. e. searched.

and said hee would abide ther three dayes; and hee asked sir Melias how it stoode with him. Then hee said hee was turned unto helping, God bee thanked.

CHAP. XLII.—How sir Galahad departed, and how he was commaunded to goe unto the castle of Maidens for to destroy the wicked custome.

OW will I depart," said sir Galahad, "for I have much in hand, for many good knights bee full busie about it, and this knight and I were in the same quest of the sanegreall." "Sir," said a good man, "for his sinne hee was thus wounded; and I mervaile," said the good man, "how ye durst take upon you so rich a thing as the high order of knighthood without cleane confession, and that was the cause yee were so bitterly wounded. For the way on the right hand betokneth the hie way of our Lord Jesu Christ, and the way of a true and good liver, and the other way betokneth the way of sinners and misbeleevers. And when the divell saw your pride and presumption for to take you in the quest of the holy sanegreall, that made you for to bee overthrown, for it may not be achieved but by vertuous living. Also the writing on the crosse was a signification of heavenly deeds and of knightly deeds in Gods workes, and pride is the head of all deadly sinnes, that caused this knight to depart sir Galahad; and where thou tookest the crowne of gold, thou sinned in coveteousnesse and in theft, and these were no knights deeds. And this holy knight sir Galahad, the which fought with the two knights, and the two knights doth signifie the two deadly sinnes which were entierly in the knight sir Melias, and they might not withstand you, for yee are without deadly sinne." Now departed sir Galahad from thence, and betooke them all unto God. Sir Melias said, "My lord sir Galahad, as soone as I may ride I shall seek you." "God send you good helpe," said sir Galahad. And so hee tooke his horse, and de-

parted, and rode many journeys forward and backward, as adventure would leade him; and at the last it hapned him to depart from a place or a castle that was named Abblasour, and hee had not heard no masse, the which hee was alwayes wont to heare or that hee departed out of any castle or place, and kept that for a custome. Then sir Galahad came unto a mountaine where hee found an old chappel, and found there nobody, for all was desolate. And there hee kneeled before the alter, and besought God of holsome counsaile; so, as hee praied, hee heard a voice that said thus, "Go now, thou adventurous knight, unto the castle of Maidens, and there doe thou away all the wicked customes."

CHAP. XLIII.—How sir Galahad fought with the knights of the castle, and destroyed the wicked custome.

THEN as sir Galahad heard this, hee thanked God, and tooke his horse, and hee had not ridden but halfe a mile, he saw in a valey before him a strong castle with deepe ditches, and there ranne beside a faire river, the which hight Sevarne;[1] and there hee met with a man of great age, and either saluted other, and sir Galahad asked him what was the castles name. "Faire sir," said he, "it is the castle of Maidens." "That is a cursed castle," said sir Galahad, "and all they that beene conversant therin, for all petie is out therof, and all hardinesse and mischiefe is therein." "Therefore I counsell you, sir knight," said the old man, "to returne againe." "Sir," said sir Galahad, "wit yee well I shall not returne againe." Then looked sir Galahad on his armour that nothing failed him, and then he put his shield afore him; and anon there met him seven maidens, that said unto him, "Sir knight, yee ride here in a great

[1] *Sevarne.*—The river Severn must be meant; but this will not at all suit the ordinary explanation of the castle of Maidens. See vol. ii. p. 127.

folly, for yee have the waters for to passe over." "Why should I not passe here over this water?" said sir Galahad. And so he departed away from them, and then he met with a squier that said, "Sir knight, those knights in the castle defie you, and forbid you that yee goe no further, till that they wit what yee would." "Faire fellow," said sir Galahad, "I am come to destroy the wicked custome of this castle." "Sir," said the squier, "and yee will abide by that, ye shall have inough to doe." "Goe yee now," said sir Galahad, "and hast my matter." Then the squier entred into the castle; and anon after there came out of the castle seven knights, and all were bretheren; and when they saw sir Galahad, they cried, "Knight, keepe thee, for we assure thee nothing but death." "Why," said sir Galahad, "will yee all have to doe with me at once?" "Yea," said they all, "for therto maist thou trust." Then sir Galahad put foorth his speare, and smote the formost to the earth, that almost hee had broken his necke; and therewith all the other smot on his shield great strookes, so that all their speares brake. Then sir Galahad drew out his sword, and set upon them so hard that it was mervaile to see it; and so through great force hee made them to forsake the field, and sir Galahad chaced them untill they entred into the castle, and so passed through the castle at another gate. And there met sir Galahad an old man clothed in religious clothing, the which said to him, "Sir, have heere the keyes of the castle." Then sir Galahad opened the gates, and saw so much people in the streete, that hee might not number them; and they said, "Sir, yee bee welcome, for long have wee abidden heere our deliverance." And then there came unto him a gentlewoman, and said, "These knights be fled, but they will come againe this night, and here begin againe their evill and wicked custome." "What will yee that I shall do?" said sir Galahad. "Sir," said the gentlewoman, "that yee send after all those knights hether that hold their lands of this

castle, and make them swere for to use the custome that were used heretofore of old time." "I will well," said sir Galahad. And then the gentlewoman brought him an horne of ivory, richly bounden with gold, and said, "Sir, blow yee this horne, which will be heard two mile about this castle." And when sir Galahad had blowne the horne, hee set him downe upon a bed. Then came there a priest unto sir Galahad, and said, "Sir, it is past a seaven yeare that these seven brethren came into this castle, and herborowed with the lord of this castle, which hight the duke Lianour; and hee was lord of all this countrey. And so when they espied the dukes daughter that was a faire woman, then by theire false covine they made debate betweene themselves, and the duke of his goodnesse would have departed them; and there they slew him and his eldest sonne, and then they tooke the maiden and the treasour of the castle. And then by great force they held all the knights of this castle against their will under their obeissance, and in great servage and truage, robbing and pilling the poore common people of all that they had. So it hapned upon a day that the dukes daughter said, 'Yee have done to me great wrong to sley mine owne father and my brother, and thus to hold our lands; not for then,' said shee, 'yee shall not hold this castle for many yeares; for by one knight yee shall bee overcome.' Thus shee prophecied seven yeare before. 'Well,' said the seven knights, 'sithence yee say so, there shall never lady nor knight passe this castle, but they shall abide mauger their heads, or die therefore, till that knight bee come by whom wee shall lease this castle.' And therefore it is called the maidens castle, for they have devoured many maidens." "Now," said sir Galahad, "is shee heere for whom this castle was lost?" "Nay," said the priest, "shee died within three nights after that shee was thus enforced: and sithence have they kept her young sister, which endureth great paine, with moe other ladies." By this were the

knights of the countrey come, and then hee made them to doe homage and fealty to the dukes daughter; and set them in great ease of heart. And on the morrow there came one unto sir Galahad, and told him how sir Gawaine and sir Gareth and sir Uwaine had slaine the seven brethren. "I suppose well," said sir Galahad; and then he tooke his armour and his horse, and commended them to God.

CHAP. XLIV.—How sir Gawaine came unto the abbey for to follow after sir Galahad, and how he was shriven unto an hermite.

OW, saith the story, after that sir Gawaine was departed, hee rode many divers journeys, both toward and froward, and so at the last hee came unto the abbey where as sir Galahad had the white shield. And there sir Gawaine learned the very way for to follow after sir Galahad, and so he rode unto the abbey where as sir Melias lay sicke; and there sir Melias told sir Gawaine of the mervailous adventure that sir Galahad had done. "Truely," said sir Gawaine, "I am not happie that I tooke not the way that he went, for and I may meete with him I will not depart from him lightly, for al the mervailous adventures sir Galahad atchieveth." "Sir," said one of the munkes, "hee will not bee of your fellowship." "Why?" said sir Gawaine. "Sir," said he, "for ye be wicked and sinfull, and hee is blissefull." Right as they stood thus talking together, there came in riding sir Gareth; and then they made great joy either of other. And on the morrow they heard masse, and so departed. And by the way they met with sir Uwaine le Avoutres; and there sir Uwaine told sir Gawaine how hee had met with none adventure siththence hee departed from the court. "Nor wee," said sir Gawaine. And either promised other of these three knights not to depart while that they were in the quest, but if fortune caused it. So they departed, and rode by fortune till

that they came unto the castle of Maidens; and there the seaven bretheren espied the three knights. And then they said, "Siththence we be banished by one knight from this castle, wee shall destroy all the knights of king Arthurs that we may overcome for the love of sir Galahad. And therewith the seven knights set upon the three knights; and by fortune sir Gawaine slew one of the seaven brethren, and each of his fellowes slew another, and so slew the remnant. And then they tooke their way under the castle; and there they lost the way that sir Galahad rode, and every one of them departed from other. And sir Gawaine rode till he came to an hermitage, and there he found the good man saying his even-song of our Lady; and there sir Gawaine asked harbour for charitie, and the good man graunted it him gladly. Then the good man asked him what hee was, and from whence he came. "Sir," said he, "I am a knight of king Arthurs court, that am in the quest of the sanegreall, and my name is sir Gawaine." "Sir," said the good man, "I will wit how it standeth betweene God and you." "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "I will with a good will shew you my life and it please you." And there hee told the good man how a munke of an abbey called him a wicked knight. "He might right well say it," said the good man; "for when ye were first made knight, ye should have taken you unto knightly deedes and vertuous living, and ye have done the contrary, for ye have lived mischievously many winters. And the noble knight sir Galahad is a maiden, and never sinned; and that is the cause he shall achieve whersoever he goeth, that ye nor none such shal not attaine, nor none of your fellowship; for yee have used the most untruest life that ever I heard knight live. For truely had yee not beene so wicked as yee are, never had the seven bretheren beene slaine by you and by your two fellowes; for sir Galahad himselfe all alone beate them all seven that day before; but his living is such that hee shall sley no man lightly. Also I may say to you, the castle of Maidens

betokeneth the good soules that were in prison afore the incarnation of Christ; and the seaven knights betoken the seaven deadly sinnes which reigned that time in the world. And I may liken the good knight sir Galahad unto the sonne of the high father that light within a maiden, and brought all the soules out of thraldome; so did sir Galahad deliver all the maidens out of the woful castle. Now sir Gawaine," said the good man, "thou must doe penance for thy sinnes." "Sir, what penance shall I doe?" "Such as I will give," said the good man. "Nay," said sir Gawaine, "I may doe no penance, for wee knights adventurous often suffer great woe and paine." "Well," said the good man, and then he held his peace. And on the morrow sir Gawaine departed from the hermite, and betooke him unto God. And by adventure hee met with sir Aglovale and sir Griflet, two knights of the round table. And they two had riden foure days without finding of any adventure; and at the fift day they departed, and every each held as fell them by adventure.

CHAP. XLV.—How sir Galahad met with sir Launcelot and with sir Percivale, and smote them both downe, and departed from them.

SO when sir Galahad was departed from the castle of Maydens, he rode till he came unto a wast forrest, and there hee met with sir Launcelot and sir Percivale, but none of them both knew him not, for hee was new disguised. Right so sir Launcelot his father dressed his speare and brake it upon his sonne sir Galahad; and sir Galahad smote him so hard againe, that he smote downe both horse and man; and then he drew his sword and dressed him unto sir Percivale, and smote him so on the helme that it rove the coyfe of steele, and if the sword had not swerved, sir Percivale had beene slaine, and with the strooke he fell out of his saddle. These justes were done before the hermitage, where a re-

cluse dwelled: and when she saw sir Galahad ride, shee said, "God bee with thee, the best knight of the world! Ah, certainely," said she all aloud, that sir Launcelot and sir Percivale might heare it, "and yonder two knights had knowne thee as well as I doe, they would not have encountred with thee." When sir Galahad heard her say so, hee was sore adread to be knowne. Therewithall hee smote his horse with his spurrs, and rode a great pace froward them. Then perceived they both that it was sir Galahad, and up they gat on their horses, and rode fast after him; but within a while he was out of their sight. And then they turned againe with an heavie cheare. "Let us aske some tidings," said sir Percivale, "at yonder recluse." "Doe as ye list," said sir Launcelot. When sir Percivale came unto the recluse, she knew him well enough, and in likewise shee knew sir Launcelot. But sir Launcelot rode overthwart and endlong in a wild forrest, and held no path but as wild adventure led him, and at the last he came unto a stone crosse, which departed two wayes in wast land. And by the crosse was a ston that was of marble; but it was so darke that sir Launcelot might not well know what it was. Then sir Launcelot looked by him, and saw an old chappell, and there hee wend to have found people. And so sir Launcelot tied his horse to a tree, and there hee put off his shield, and hung it upon a tree, and then hee went unto the chappell doore, and found it wasted and broken. And within he found a faire alter, ful richly arrayed with cloth of silk, and there stood a faire candelstick which beare six great candels, and the candlesticke was of silver. And when sir Launcelot saw this light, hee had a great will for to enter into the chappell, but hee could find no place where hee might enter. Then was he passing heavie and dismaied. Then hee returned, and came againe to his horse, and tooke off his saddle and his bridle, and let him pasture; and unlaced his helme, and ungirded his sword, and laid him downe to sleepe upon his shield before the crosse.

CHAP. XLVI.—How sir Launcelot, halfe sleeping and halfe waking, saw a sicke man borne in a horse litter, and how hee was healed with the sancgreall.

AND so hee fell on sleepe, and halfe waking and halfe sleeping he saw come by him two palfryes, both faire and white, the which beare a litter, therein lying a sicke knight; and when he was nigh the crosse, he there abode still. All this sir Launcelot saw and beheld, for hee slept not verily, and hee heard him say, "Oh, sweete Lord, when shall this sorrow leave me? and when shall the holy vessell come by me, wherethrough I shall be blessed? for I have endured thus long for little trespasse." And thus a great while complained the knight, and allwaies sir Launcelot heard it. With that sir Launcelot saw the candelsticke with the sixe tapers come before the crosse, but he could see nobody that brought it; also there came a table of silver, and the holy vessell of the sancgreal, the which sir Launcelot had seene before that time in king Petchours house. And therewithall the sicke knight set him upright, and held up both his hands and said, "Faire sweete Lord, which is heere within the holy vessell, take heede to mee that I may bee hole of this great malady." And therewith upon his hands and upon his knees he went so nigh that he touched the holy vessell and kissed it, and anon he was hole; and then he said, "Lord God, I thank thee, for I am healed of this malady." Soe when the holy vessell had beene there a great while, it went unto the chappell againe with the candlesticke and the light, so that sir Launcelot wist not where it became, for he was overtaken with sinne, that hee had no power to arise against the holy vessell, wherefore afterward many men said of him shame; but hee tooke repentance afterward. Then the sicke knight dressed him upright, and kissed the crosse. Then anon his squire brought him his armes, and asked his lord how he did.

"Certainely," said hee, "I thanke God right heartily, for through the holy vessell I am healed; but I have right great mervaile of this sleeping knight, which hath had neither grace nor power to awake during the time that this holy vessell hath beene here present." "I dare it right well say," said the squire, "that this same knight is defouled with some manner of deadly sinne, whereof he was never confessed." "By my faith," said the knight, "whatsoever he be, he is unhappie, for as I deeme hee is of the fellowship of the round table, the which is entred into the quest of the sanegreall." "Sir," said the squire, "here I have brought you all your armes save your helme and your sword, and therefore by mine assent now may ye take this knights helme and his sword;" and so he did. And when he was cleane armed, he tooke sir Launcelots horse, for he was better then his owne. And so they departed from the crosse.

CHAP. XLVII.—How a voice speake to sir Launcelot, and how hee missed his horse and his helme, and after went on foote.

THEN anon sir Launcelot awaked, and set himselfe upright, and bethought him what hee had there seene, and whether it were dreames or not. Right so he heard a voice that said, "Sir Launcelot, more hardy then is the stone, and more bitter then is the wood, and more naked and bare then is the leefe of the fig-tree, therefore go thou from hence, and withdraw thee from this holy place." And when sir Launcelot heard this, he was passing heavy, and wist not what to doe. And so he departed sore weeping, and cursed the time that hee was borne, for then hee deemed never to have had more worship; for the words went unto his heart, till that hee knew wherefore that hee was so called. Then sir Launcelot went to the crosse, and found that his helme, his sword, and his horse was taken away; and then hee

called himselfe a very wretch, and most unhappy of all knights. And there he said, "My sinne and my wretchednesse hath brought me unto great dishonour; for when I sought worldly adventures and worldly desires, I ever achieved them, and had the better in every place, and never was I discomfited in no quarell, were it right or wrong. And now I take upon mee the adventures of holy things; and now I see and understand that mine old sinne hindreth mee, and also shameth mee, so that I had no power to stire nor to speake when the holy blood appeared before mee." So thus hee sorrowed till it was day, and heard the foules of the ayre sing; then was hee somewhat comforted. But when sir Launcelot missed his horse and his harneys, then wist he well that God was displeased with him. Then hee departed from the crosse on foot into a wild forrest; and so by prime[1] hee came unto an high mountaine, and there he found an heremitage, and an hermite therin, which was going to masse. And then sir Launcelot kneeled downe upon both his knees, and cried our Lord mercy for his wicked workes that he had done. So when masse was done, sir Launcelot called the hermite to him, and praied him for charitie to here his confession. "With a good wil," said the good man. "Sir," said he, "bee yee of king Arthurs court, and of the noble fellowship of the round table?" "Yee forsooth, and my name is sir Launcelot du Lake, which hath beene right well said off, and greatly magnified; and now it is so, my good fortune is changed, for I am the most wretch and caytife of the world." Then the hermit beheld him, and had great mervaile how hee was so sore abashed. "Sir," said the hermit, "ye ought to thanke God more then any knight living; for he hath caused you to have more worldly worship then any knight that now liveth; and for your presumption to take upon you in deadly sinne for to bee in his presence, where his flesh and his blood was, that caused

[1] *Prime.*—Six o'clock in the morning.

you yee might not see it with your worldly eye. For he will not appeere where such sinners bee, but if it be unto their great hurt, and unto their great shame. And there is no knight living that ought for to give unto God so great thanks as yee; for hee hath given unto you beautie, seemelinesse, and great strength, above all other knights, and therefore yee are the more beholding unto God then any other man to love him and to dread him, for your strength and manhood will little availe you and God be against you."

CHAP. XLVIII.—How sir Launcelot was shriven of his sinnes, and what sorrow he made, and of the good ensamples that were shewed him.

HEN sir Launcelot wept, and made full heavy cheere, and said, "Now I know well ye tell me truth." "Sir," said the good man, "hide none old sinne from me." Then said sir Launcelot, "That were me full loth to discover; for this fourteene yeare I never discovered any thing which I have used, and that may I now wit[1] my shame and my misadventure." And then hee told there that good man all his life, and how hee had loved a queene unmeasurably many yeares, "and all the great deeds of armes that I have done, I did the most part for the queenes sake, and for her sake would I doe battaile, were it right or wrong, and never did I battaile all onely for Gods sake, but for to winne worship and to cause mee to bee the better beloved, and little or nought I thanked God of it." Then sir Launcelot said, "I pray you counsaile me." "I will counsaile you," said the hermit; "if yee will ensure mee that yee will never come in that queenes fellowship as much as yee may forbeare." And then sir Launcelot promised the hermit by his faith that hee would no more come in her company. "Looke that your heart and your mouth accord," said the good man, "and I shall ensure you that yee shall have

[1] *Wit.*—Know.

more worship then ever yee had." "Holy father," said sir Launcelot, "I mervaile of the voice that said to mee mervailous words, as yee have heard here before." "Have yee no mervaile thereof," said the good man, "for it seemeth well that God loveth you, for men may understand that a stone is hard of kind, and namely one more then an other, and that is to understand by thee, sir Launcelot, for thou wilt not leave thy sinne for no goodnesse that God hath sent thee, therfore thou art more harder then any stone, and never would thou bee made soft neither by water nor by fire, and that is, the heate of the Holy Ghoost may not enter in thee. Now take heed, in all the world men shall not find one knight to whom our Lord hath given so much grace as our Lord hath given you; for hee hath given you fairenesse with seemelinesse, he hath given you wit and discretion for to know good from evill, hee hath given you prowesse and hardinesse, and hath given you to worke so largly, that yee have had at all times the better where soever yee came; and now our Lord will suffer you no longer, but that ye shal know him whether ye will or not. And why the voice called thee bitterer then wood, for where overmuch sin dwelleth, there may be but little sweetnesse, wherefore thou art likned to an old rotten tree. Now I have shewed thee why thou art harder then the stone and bitterer then the tree; now I shall shew thee why thou art more naked and barer then the fig tree. It befell that our Lord Jesu Christ preached on Palme Sunday in Jerusalem, and there hee found in the people that al hardnesse was herbowred in them, and there hee could not find one in all the towne that would herborow him; and then hee went without the towne, and found in the mids of the way a fig tree, the which was right faire and well garnished with leaves, but fruite had it none; then our Lord cursed the tree that bare no fruite, that betokeneth[1] the fig tree unto Jerusalem, that had leaves and no fruite. So thou, sir

[1] *Betokeneth-unto.*—i. e. makes the fig-tree a token to Jerusalem.

Launcelot, when the holy grale was brought before thee, hee found in thee no fruite, neither good thought nor good will, and defouled with leachery." "Certainely," said sir Launcelot, "all that ye have said is true, and from henceforward I cast mee by the grace of God never to bee so wicked as I have beene; but as to follow knighthood and to doe feates of armes." Then the good man enjoyned sir Launcelot such penance as hee might doe, and to shew[1] knighthood; and so hee assoyled[2] sir Launcelot, and prayed him to abide with him all that day. "I will well," said sir Launcelot, "for I have neither helme, nor horse, nor sword." "As for that," said the good man, "I shall helpe you or to morrow at even of an horse and all that belongeth unto you." And then sir Launcelot repented him greatly.

CHAP. XLIX.—How sir Percivale came unto a recluse and asked her counsaile, and how she told him that she was his aunt.

OW, saith the tale, that when sir Launcelot was ridden after sir Galahad his sonne, the which had all these adventures here above rehearsed, sir Percivale returned againe unto the recluse, where he deemed to have tidings of that knight which sir Launcelot followed; and so hee kneeled at her window, and anon the recluse opened it, and asked sir Percivale what hee would. "Madame," said hee, "I am a knight of king Arthurs court, and my name is sir Percivale de Galis." So when the recluse heard his name, shee made passing great joy of him, for greatly she loved him before all other knights of the world, for so of right she ought to doe, for shee was his aunt. And then she commanded that the gates should be opened to him, and ther sir Percivale had all the cheere that she might make him, and al that was in her power was at his commandement. So on

[1] *To shew.—To sewe*, Caxton; i. e. to follow.
[2] *Assoyled.*—Gave absolution to.

the morrow sir Percivale went unto the recluse, and asked her if shee knew that knight with the white shield. "Sir," said she, "why would yee wit?" "Truely, madame," said sir Percivale, "I shall never bee well at ease till that I know of that knights fellowship, and that I may fight with him; for I may not leave him so lightly, for I have the shame yet." "Ah! sir Percivale," said she, "would yee fight with him? I see well yee have great will to bee slaine as your father was through outragiousnesse." "Madame," said sir Percivale, "it seemeth by your words that yee know me." "Yee," said shee, "I well ought to know you, for I am your aunt, allthough I bee in a priory place; for I was sometime called the queene of the wast lands, and I was called the queene of most richesse in the world, and it pleased me never so much my richesse as doth my povertie." Then sir Percivale wept for very great pitie when hee knew shee was his aunt. "Ah! faire nephew," said shee, "when heard yee any tidings from your mother?" "Truely," said hee, "I heard not of her in a great while, but I have dreamed[1] of her much in my sleepe, and therfore I wot not whether she be dead or alive." "Certainely, faire nephew," said she, "your mother is dead, for after your departing from her shee tooke such a sorrow, that anon after shee was confessed she died." "Now God have mercy upon her soule," said sir Percivale, "it sore forethinketh mee, but all wee must change our life. Now, faire aunt, tell me what is the knight? I deeme it bee hee that beare the red armes on Whitsunday." "Wit ye well," said his aunt, "that is hee, for otherwise hee ought not to doe, but to goe in red armes, and that same knight hath no peere, for hee worketh all by miracle, and he shall never be overcome of no earthly mans hands.

[1] *Dreamed.*—In the Middle Ages, dreams were objects of great superstition, and to dream of an absent person seems to have been considered as betokening his or her death. Hence the remark here made by sir Percivale.

CHAP. L.—How Merlin likned the round table to the world, and how the knights that should achieve the sancgreall should be knowen.

ALSO Merlin made the round table in token of the roundnesse of the world;[1] for by the round table is the world signified by right. For all the world, christen and heathen, resort unto the round table, and when they are chosen to be of the fellowship of the round table, they thinke them more blessed and more in worship then if they had gotten halfe the world; and ye have seene that they have lost their fathers and their mothers, and all their kinne, and their wives and their children, for to be of your fellowship. It is well seene by you, for sith ye departed from your mother ye would never see her, ye found such a fellowshippe at the round table. When Merlin had ordained the round table, he said, 'By them that should be fellowes of the round table the truth of the sancgreall shall be knowne.' And men asked him how men might know them that should best do to the achieveing of the sancgreall. Then said he, 'There should bee three white bulls that should achieve it, and the two should be maidens, and the third should bee chast; and that one of the three should passe his father, as much as the lyon passeth his libbard,[2] both of strength and of hardinesse.' They which heard Merlin say so, said thus unto Merlin: 'Siththence there shall be such a knight, thou shouldest ordaine by thy craft a siege that no man should sit therein, but he only which shall passe all other knights.' And then Merlin answered that he would doe so; and then he made the siege perilous, in which sir Galahad sat at his meate upon Whitsunday last past." "Now, madame," said sir Percivale, "so much have I heard of you, that by

[1] *Roundnesse of the world.*—It is necessary to state, in explanation of this chapter, that it was long the common notion that the form of the world was that of a round flat surface, not spherical.

[2] *Libbard.*—A leopard.

my good will I will never have to doe with sir Galahad but[1] by way of kindnesse and for Gods love. Faire aunt, can ye teach me some way where I may finde him? for much wold I love the felowshipe of him." "Faire nephewe," said shee, "yee must ride unto a castle that is called Goth, where he hath a cosin germain, and there may ye be lodged this night, and as hee techeth you, folow after as fast as yee can. And if he can tell you no tidings of him, ride straight unto the castle of Carbonek, where the maimed king is lying, for there shall yee heare true tidings of him."

CHAP. LI.—How sir Percivale came into a monastery, where he found king Evelake, which was an olde man.

THEN departed sir Percivale from his aunt, either making great sorow, and so hee rode till even-song time,[2] and then he heard a clock smite, and after hee was ware of a house that was well closed with walls and deepe ditches, and there he knocked at the gate and was let in; and hee alighted, and was led into a chamber, and soon he was unarmed. And there he had ful good cheere all that night, and on the morowe hee heard a mass, and in the monastery hee found a priest ready at the altar, and on the right side he saw a pew closed with iron; and behind the altar he saw a rich bed and a faire, as of cloth of silk and of gold. Then

[1] *Sir Galahad but.*—The remainder of this chapter, the whole of chapter LI, and nearly the whole of LII, are omitted in the edition of 1634, by an oversight of the printer, who, it appears, used a copy of East's folio edition, in which a leaf was wanting. The omission is here supplied from that edition, collated with Caxton; it ends with the words, *a good horse would beseem you right well, but,* p. 92. The leaf thus overlooked ends with the same catchword as the one preceding it, which accounts in some measure for the oversight of the printer in not perceiving the break in the narrative.

[2] *Even-song time.*—See before, p. 64.

sir Percivale espied that therein was a man or a woman, for the visage was covered. Then he left of his looking, and heard his service, and when it came to the sacring, he that lay within that perclose[1] dressed him up, and uncovered his head; and then him beseemed a passing olde man, and he had a crown of gold upon his head, and his shoulders were all naked and unheled[2] unto his navel. And then sir Percivale espied how his body was full of great woundes, both on the shoulders, arms, and visage. And ever he held up his handes unto our Lords body, and said on high: "Faire sweet father, Jesu Christ forget not mee." And so he laid him downe; but always he was in his prayers and orisons, and him seemed for to be of the age of three hundred winters old. And when the masse was done, the priest took our Lords body and bare it unto the sicke king; and when he had received it, he did of his crown, and he commaunded the crown to be set on the altar. Then sir Percivale asked one of the bretheren what he was. "Sir," said the good man, "ye have heard much of Joseph of Arimathy, how he was sent by Jesu Christ into this land for to preach and teach the Christian faith, and therefore hee suffered many persecutions, the which the enemies of Christ did unto him. And in the city of Sarras he converted a king that hight Evelake; and so this king came with Joseph of Arimathy into this land, and always he was busy to be there as the sancgreall was. And upon a time he nighed so nigh that our Lord was displeased with him, but ever he folowed it more and more, till that God struck him almost blinde. Then this king cried mercy, and said: 'Faire Lord, let me never die till that the good knight of my blood of the ninth degree be come, that I may see him openlie when he shall achieve the sancgreall that I may once kisse him.'

[1] *Perclose.*—A small room partitioned off.
[2] *Unheled.*—Uncovered.

CHAP. LII.—How sir Percivale saw many men of armes bearing a dead knight, and how he fought against them.

THEN when the king had thus made his prayeres, he heard a voice that said, 'Heard been thy prayeres, for thou shalt not die til hee have kissed thee. And when that knight shall come, the clearnes of your eyes shall come again, and ye shall see openly and your wounds shall be healed, and or then shall they never close.' And this befel of king Evelake. And this same king hath lived above three hundred winters this holy life; and men say that the knight is in the court that shall heale him. Sir," said the good man, "I pray ye tell me what knight ye be, and if ye be of the court of king Arthur, and knight of the round table." "Yea, forsooth," said he, "and my name is sir Percivale de Galis." And when the good man understood and knew his name, he made of him great joy.

And then sir Percivale departed, and rode till the hour of noon; and he met in a valley about twenty men of arms, which bear in a bier a knight that was slain. And when they saw sir Percivale, they asked him of whence hee was. And he answered and said, "Of the court of king Arthur." Then they cried all at once, "Slay him." Then sir Percivale smote the first to the ground, and his horse upon him. And then seven of the knights smote upon his shield all at once, and the remnaunt slew his horse, so that he felle to the ground. So had they slain him or taken him, had not the knight sir Galahad with the red arms come there by adventure into those parts, and when he saw all those knights upon one knight, he cried, "Save that knights life." And then he dressed him toward the twenty men of arms as fast as his horse might drive, with his spear in the rest, and smote the foremost horse and man to the ground; and when his spear was broken, he set his hand to his sword, and smote on the right hand and on the left hand, that it

was a mervail to see. And at every stroke he smote one down, or els put him to a rebuke, so that they would fight no more, but fled into a thick forrest, and sir Galahad folowed after them. And when sir Percivale saw sir Galahad chased them so, he had great sorrow that his horse was away. And then he wist well it was sir Galahad, and cried aloud, "A! faire knight, abide and suffer mee to do thankings unto thee, for much have yee done for me." But ever sir Galahad rode so faste, that at the last he passed out of his sight. And as fast as sir Percivale might hee went after him on foot, crying. And then he met with a yeoman riding upon a hackney, the which led in his hand a great steed, blacker than any beare. "A! faire friend," said sir Percivale, "as ever I may doe for you, and to bee your true knight in the first place yee will require me or desire me of any thing, that ye will lend me that blacke steed, that I might overtake a knight, the which rideth before me." "Sir knight," said the yeoman, "I pray you hold me excused of that, for that may I not do; for wit ye well, the horse is such a mans horse, that and I lend him you or any other man, that he should slay me." "Alas!" said sir Percivale, "I had never in my life so great sorrow as I have had for lesing of yonder knight." "Sir," said the yeoman, "I am right hevy for you, for a good horse would beseem you right well, but I dare not deliver you this horse, but if yee would take him from mee." "That will I not doe," said sir Percivale. And so they departed.[1] And sir Percivale sat him downe under a tree, and made sorrow out of measure. And as he was there, there came a knight riding on the horse that the yeoman led, and he was cleane armed.

[1] *Departed.*—Separated.

CHAP. LIII.—How a yeoman desired him to get againe an horse, and how sir Percivales hackney was slaine, and how he gat an horse.

AND anon the yeoman come riding after as fast as ever he might, and asked sir Percivale if hee saw any knight riding on his blacke steede. "Yea, forsooth," said he, "why aske yee that of me?" "Ah, sir," said the yeoman, "that steede hee hath taken from me by strength, wherefore my lord will slay mee in what place soever hee findeth mee." "Well," said sir Percivale, "what wouldest thou that I should doe? thou seest well that I am on foote, but and I had a good horse, I should bring him soone againe." "Sir," said the yeoman, "take mine hackney and doe the best ye can, and I shal follow you on foote, to wit how ye shall speed." Then sir Percivale mounted upon that hackney, and rode as fast as he might. And at the last hee saw that knight, and then he cried, "Knight, turne againe." And he turned, and set his speare against sir Percivale, and he smote the hackney in the midest of the brest, that hee fell downe dead to the earth, and there hee had a great fall, and the other rode his way. And then sir Percivale was wood wroth, and cried, "Abide, thou wicked knight, coward and false hearted knight, turne againe and fight with me on foote." But he answered not, but past forth his way. When sir Percivale saw he would not turne, he cast away his helme and his sword, and said, "Now am I a very wretch, cursed, and most unhapie above all other knights." So in this sorrow he abode all that day till it was night, and then hee was faint and laid him downe and slept till it was midnight; and then he awaked, and saw before him a woman, that said unto him right fiersly, "Sir Percivale, what doest thou here?" Hee answered and said, "I doe neither good nor evill." "If thou wilt ensure mee," said she, "that thou wilt fulfill my will when I shall sommon thee,

I shall lend thee mine owne horse, which shall beare thee whether thou wilt." Sir Percivale was glad of her proffer, and ensured her to fulfill all her desire. "Then abide me heere," said shee, "and I shall goe and fetch you an horse." And so she came soone again, and brought an horse with her that was blacke. When sir Percivale beheld that horse, he mervailed that he was so great and so well apparalled, and not for then hee was so hardy that he lept upon him, and tooke no heede to himselfe. And so anon as he was upon him, he thrust to him with his spurres, and so rode by a forrest, and the moone shined cleare, and within an houre and lesse he beare him foure dayes journey thence, til hee came to a rough water that roared, and his horse would have borne him into it.

CHAP. LIV.—Of the great danger that sir Percivale was in by his horse, and how he saw a serpent and a lyon fight.

AND when sir Percivale came nigh the brimme, and saw the water so boystrous, he doubted to passe over it; and then hee made the signe of the crosse on his forehead. When the feend felt him so charged, he shooke off sir Percivale, and he went into the water crying and roaring and making great sorrow, and it seemed to him that the water brent. Then sir Percivale perceived that it was a feend, which would have brought him unto his perdition. Then he commended himselfe unto God, and prayed our Lord to keepe him from all such temptations, and so he prayed all that night till on the morrow that it was day. Then saw he that he was on a wild mountaine, which was closed with the sea nigh all about, that hee might see no land about him which might releeve him, but wild beasts. And then he went into a valley, and there he saw a young serpent bring a young lyon by the necke, and so hee came by sir Percivale. With that there came a lyon crying and roaring after the serpent, and as soone as sir Percivale saw this, he mervailed and

hied him thither; but anon the lyon had overtaken the serpent, and began battaile with him. And then sir Percivale thought to helpe the lyon, for hee was the most naturall beast of the two; and therewith he drew his sword, and set his shield before him, and there gave the serpent such a buffet that he had a deadly[1] wound. When the lyon saw that, hee made no semblance to fight with him, but made him all the cheare that a beast might make a man. When sir Percivale perceived that, he cast downe his shield, the which was brooken, and then he put off his helme for to gather wind, for he was greatly chafed[2] with the serpent; and the lyon went alway about him fawning like a spannel. And then he stroked him with his hand upon the neck and upon the shoulders, and gave thankes unto God of the fellowship of the beast. And about noone the lyon tooke his little whelpe and trussed him, and beare him unto the place that hee came from, and then was sir Percivale alone. And as the story telleth, hee was one of the men of the world at that time that most beleeved in our Lord Jesu Christ; for in those dayes ther were but few folk that beleeved perfectly in Almightie God our Saviour and Redeemer Jesu Christ. For in those dayes the son spared not the father no more in consideration then a stranger. And so the noble knight sir Percivale comforted himselfe in our Lord Jesu Christ, and besought God that no temptation should bring him nor pervert him out of Gods service, but for to endure and persever as his true champion. Thus when sir Percivale had prayed, hee saw the lyon come toward him, and then he couched downe at his feete, and all that night the lyon and he slept together. And when sir Percivale slept, he dreamed a mervailous dreame, that there met with him two ladies, and the one sat upon a lyon, and that other sat upon a serpent, and the one of them was young and the other was old, and the youngest him thought said, "Sir Percivale, my lord saluteth thee and sendeth thee word that thou array

[1] *Deadly.*—Mortal. [2] *Chafed.*—i. e. heated; *enchafed*, Caxton.

thee and make thee ready, for to morrow thou must fight with the strongest champion of the world, and if thou bee overcome, thou shalt not bee quite for leesing of any of thy members, but thou shalt be shamed to the worlds end." And then he asked her who was her lord. And she said, "The greatest lord of the world." And so she departed suddenly, and he wist not where she became.

CHAP. LV.—Of the vision that sir Percivale saw, and how his vision was expounded, and of his lyon.

THEN came forth the other lady that rode upon the serpent, and shee said: "Sir Percivale, I complaine mee of you that ye have done to me, and have not offended unto you." "Certainly, madame," said hee, "unto you nor no lady I never offended." "Yes," said she, "I shall tell you why; I have nourished in this place a great while a serpent, which served me a great while, and yesterday ye slew him, for the lyon was not yours." "Madame," said sir Percivale, "I know well that the lyon is not mine, but I did it for the lyon is of a more gentiler nature then the serpent, and therefore I slew him; me seemeth I did not amisse against you. Madame," said hee, "what would ye that I did?" "I would," said she, "that for the amends of my beast that yee become my man." And then he answered, "That will I not graunt you." "No," said she, "truly yee were never but my servant, save sith yee received the homage of our Lord Jesu Christ, and therefore I ensure you that in what place soever I may find you without keeping, I shall take you as hee that somtime was my man." And so shee departed from sir Percivale, and left him sleeping, the which was sore travailed of his vision; and on the morrow hee rose and blessed him, and he was passing feeble. Then was sir Percivale ware in the sea, and saw a ship come sailing toward him, and sir Percivale went unto the ship,

and found it covered within and without with white samite, and at the border[1] stood an old man clothed in a surplis in the likenesse of a priest. "Sir," said sir Percivale, "ye be welcome." "God keepe you," said the good man. "Sir," said the old man, "of whence bee yee?" "Sir," said sir Percivale, "I am of king Arthurs court, and a knight of the round table, the which am in the quest of the sancgreall, and heere I am in great duresse and misery, and never am I like to escape out of this wildernesse." "Doubt ye not," said the good man, "and if yee bee so true a knight as the high order of knighthood requireth, and also of heart as yee ought and should bee, yee should not doubt nor mistrust that none enemy should hurt nor feare you." "What are yee?" said sir Percivale. "Sir," said the old man, "I am of a strange countrey, and hither I come to comfort you." "Sir," said sir Percivale, "what signifieth my dreame that I dreamed this night?" And there he told him altogether. "She that rode upon the lyon," said the good man, "betokneth the new law of holy Church, that is to understand, faith, good hope, beleeve, and baptisme; for shee seemed yonger then the other, it is great reason, for shee was borne in the resurrection and the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ, and for great love shee came to thee to warne thee of the great battaile that shall befall thee." "With whom shall I fight?" said sir Percivale. "With the most champion of the world," said the old man; "for, as the lady said, but if thou quite thee well, thou shalt not be quite by loosing of one member, but yet thou shalt be shamed to the worlds end. And she that rode upon the serpent signifieth the old law, and that serpent betokneth a feend, and why shee blamed thee that thou slewest her servant, it betokneth nothing; the serpent that thou slewest betokneth the divell that thou rodest upon to the roch, and when thou madest the signe of the crosse, ther thou

[1] *At the border.—At the bord,* Caxton. A rather literal translation of the French *à bord;* i. e. on board.

slewest him and put away his power; and when she asked thee amends, and to become her man, and thou saidest thou wouldest not, that was to make thee beleeve on her, and leave thy baptisme." So hee commanded sir Percivale to depart; and so hee lept over the bord, and the ship and all went away, he wist not whether. Then hee went up unto the roch, and found the lion that alway kept him fellowship, and had great joy of him.

CHAP. LVI.—How sir Percivale saw a ship comming toward him, and how the lady of the ship told him of her disheritance.

BY that sir Percivale had abidden there till midday he saw a ship come rowing[1] in the sea as all the wind of the world had driven it; and so it drove under that roch. And when sir Percivale saw this, he hied him thither, and found the ship covered with silke more blacker than any beare,[2] and therein was a gentlewoman of great beautie, and shee was richly beseene, that none might be better. And when she saw sir Percivale, shee said, "Who brought you into this wildernesse, where yee be never like to pass hence? for yee shall die heere for hunger and mischiefe." "Damosell," said sir Percivale, "I serve the best man in the world, and in his service he shall not suffer me to die, for who that knocketh shall enter, and who that asketh shall have, and who that seeketh him he hideth him not." And then she said, "Sir Percivale, wot ye what I am?" "Yea," said sir Percivale. "Now who told yee my name?" said she. "Damosell," said sir Percivale, "I know you better then ye weene." "And I come out of the wast forrest, where I found the red knight with the white shield," said the damosell. "Ah, damosell," said hee, "with that knight would I meete passing faine." "Sir," said shee, "and yee will ensure mee, by

[1] *Come rowing.*—The word is probably used here metaphorically.
[2] *Beare.*—i. e. a bier.

the faith yee owe unto knighthood, that yee shall doe my will what time I shal summon you, I shall bring you to that knight." "Yea," said hee, "I shall promise you your desire." "Well," said shee, "I shall tell you: I saw him in the forrest chasing two knights to a water, the which is called Mortraise,[1] and hee drove them into that water for dread of death; and the two knights passed over, and the red knight passed after, and there was his horse drowned, and hee through great strength escaped unto the land." Thus shee told him, and sir Percivale was passing glad thereof. Then shee asked him if hee had eaten any meate lately. "Nay, truely, madame," said he, "I have eaten no meate nigh these three dayes, but late here I spake with a good man that fed me with his good and holy words, and refreshed me greatly." "Ah, sir knight," said shee, "that same man is an enchaunter and a multiplier of words, for and yee beleeve him yee shall plainly be shamed, and die in this rocke for pure hunger, and bee eaten with wild beasts; and yee bee a yong man and a goodly knight, and I shall helpe you and yee will." "What are yee," said sir Percivale, "that proffreth mee this great kindnesse?" "I am," said shee, "a gentlewoman that am disherited, which was sometime the richest woman of the world." "Damosell," said sir Percivale, "who hath disherited you? for I have great pitie of you." "Sir," said shee, "I dwelled with the greatest man of the world, and he made me so faire and so cleare that there was none like me, and of that great beautie I had a little pride, more then I ought to have had; also I said a word that pleased him not, and then hee would not suffer mee to bee any longer in his company, and so drove mee from mine heritage, and so disherited me, and he had never no pitie of me, nor of none of my counsaile, nor of my court; and sithence, sir knight, it hath be fallen me so, through mee and mine I have taken from him many of his men, and made them become my

[1] *Mortraise.—Mortayse,* Caxton.

men, for they aske never nothing of me but I give it them, that and much more. Thus I and all my servants warre against him night and day; therefore I know now no good knight nor no good man but I get them on my side and I may, and because I know that thou art a good knight, I beseech thee to helpe me, and for yee bee a fellow of the round table, wherefore yee ought not to faile no gentlewoman that is disherited, and if she besought you of helpe."

CHAP. LVII.—How sir Percivale promised her helpe, and how he required her of love, and how he was saved from the same feend.

THEN sir Percivale promised her all the helpe that hee might, and then shee thanked him. And at that time the weather was hote; and then she called unto her a gentlewoman, and bad her to bring forth a pavilion. And so shee did, and pight it upon the gravell. "Sir," said shee, "now may yee rest you in this heate of the day." Then hee thanked her, and shee put off his helme and his shield, and there he slept a great while; and then he awoke, and asked her if she had any meate. And shee said, "Yea, yee shall have meat enough." And so ther was set upon the table much meate; and there was so great plentie that sir Percivale had great mervaile thereof, for there was all manner of meats that he could thinke on; also he dranke there the strongest wine that ever he dranke as him thought, and therewithall hee was a little chafed,[1] more then he ought to be. With that he beheld the gentlewoman, and him thought that she was the fairest creature that ever he saw. And then sir Percivale proffered her love, and praied her that shee would bee his love. And then she refused him in a manner when hee required her, for because hee should bee the more ardent on her; and hee ceased not to pray her of love. And when shee saw him well chafed, then

[1] *Chafed.*—Heated.

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shee said, "Sir Percivale, wit yee well that I shall not fulfill your will, but if yee sweare from hence forth yee shall bee my true servant, and to doe nothing but that I shall commande you; will yee ensure me this as yee bee a true knight?" "Yea, faire lady," said he, "by the faith of my body." "Well," said she, "now shall yee do with mee whatsoever shall please you, and now wit yee well that yee are the knight in the world that I most desired." And then two squiers were commanded to make a bed in the mids of the pavilion; and anon shee was unclothed and laide therein; and then sir Percivale laid him downe by her naked. And by adventure and grace hee saw his sword lye upon the ground all naked, in whose pomell was a red crosse, and the signe of the crosse therein, and bethought him of his knighthood, and on his promise made before hand unto the good man. Then he made a signe of the crosse on his forehead, and therewithall the pavilion turned upside downe, and then it changed unto a smoake and a blacke cloud; and then hee was dread, and cried out aloud.

CHAP. LVIII.—How sir Percivale for pennance rove himselfe through the thigh, and how the damosell was knowen for the devill.

AIRE, sweet father Jesu Christ, let me not bee shamed, that was neer lost had not thy grace been." And then he looked into the ship, and saw her enter therein, which said, "Sir Percivale, ye have betrayed me." And so shee went with the wind roaring and crying,[1] that it seemed that all the water brent after her. Then sir Percivale made great sorrow, and drew his sword unto him, saying, "Siththence my flesh will be my master, I shall punish it;" and therewith he rove himselfe through the thigh, that the blood start about him,

[1] *Crying.*—Caxton's text has the more expressive word *yellynge.*

and said, "Oh, good Lord, take this in recompensation of that I have done against thee, my good Lord." So then he clothed and armed him, and called himself wretch, saying, "How nigh I had lost that which I should never have gotten againe, which is my virginitie, for that may never bee recovered after it be once lost." And then hee stopped his bleeding wound with a peece of his shirt. And thus as hee made his moane, hee saw the same ship from the Orient come that the good man was in the day before. And then was the noble knight ashamed with himselfe, and therewith hee fell in a sowne; and when hee awoke hee went unto him weakly, and there he saluted this good man. And then hee asked sir Percivale how he had done sith hee departed from him. "Sir," said hee, "heere was a gentlewoman that led mee into deadly sinne," and told him all. "Know ye not her?" said the old man. "Nay," said he, "but well I wot the feend sent her hither to shame mee." "Oh, good knight," said he, "thou art a foole, for that gentlewoman was the master feend of hell, the which hath power above all devils, and that was the old lady that thou sawest in thy vision riding upon a serpent." Then hee told sir Percivale how our Lord Jesu Christ beate him out of heaven for his sinne, the which was the most brightest angell of heaven, and therefore hee lost his heritage, "and that was the champion that thou foughtest withall, the which had overcome thee, had not the grace of God been. Now beware, sir Percivale, and take this for an ensample." And then the good man vanished away. Then sir Percivale tooke his armour, and entred into the shippe, and so departed from thence.

CHAP. LIX.—How sir Launcelot went into a chappell, where he found dead, in a white shirt, a man of religion of an hundred winters old.

NOW when the hermite had kept sir Launcelot three dayes, the hermite gat him a horse, a helme, and a sword; and then he departed about the houre of noone. And then hee saw a little house, and when hee came neere hee saw a chappell, and ther beside he saw an old man that was cloathed al in white ful richly. Then sir Lancelot said, "God save you." "God keep you wel," said the good man, "and make you a good knight." Then sir Launcelot alighted, and entred into the chappell, and there he saw an old man dead in a white shirt of passing fine cloth. "Sir," said he, "this good man that is here dead ought not to bee in such clothing as ye see him in, for that he brake the oath of his order, for he hath been more then an hundred winters a religious man."[1] And then the good man and sir Launcelot went into the chappel, and the good man tooke a stole about his necke, and a booke, and then he conjured on that booke, and with that they saw an hidious figure and an horrible, that there was no man so hard hearted nor so hardy but that he would have beene afeard. Then said the feend, "Thou hast travailed mee greatly, now tel mee what thou wilt with me." "I will," said the good man, "that thou tell me how my fellow became dead, and whether hee bee saved or damned." Then he said with an horrible voice, "Hee is not lost, but saved." "How may that be?" said the good man; "it seemed to mee that hee lived not well, for he brake his order for to were a shirt, where as he ought to were none; and who that trespasseth against our order doth not well." "Not so," said the feend; "this man that lyeth here dead was come of great linage; and there was a lord that hight the earle de Vale, that held

[1] *A religious man.*—i. e. a monk; *a man of a relygyon*, Caxton.

great warre against this mans nephew, which hight Agvarus. And so this Agvarus saw that earle was bigger then he; then he went for to take counsel of his uncle, which lieth now here dead, as yee may see, and then he asked leave, and went out of his hermitage for to maintaine his nephew against the mightie earle. And so it hapned that this man that lyeth here dead did so much by his wisdome and hardinesse, that the earle was taken and three of his lords by force of this dead man.[1]

CHAP. LX.—How men would have hewen a dead man, and it would not bee, and how that sir Launcelot tooke the haire of the dead man.

THEN was there peace betweene the earle and this Agvarus, and great suretie that the earle should never warre against him. Then this dead man that there lyeth came to this hermitage againe, and then the earle made two of his nephewes for to be avenged upon this man; so they came upon a day, and found this dead man at the sacring of the masse, and they abode till he had said his masse, and then they set upon him and drew out their swords for to have slaine him; but there would no sword bite on him, no more then upon a gad of steele, for the highe Lord which hee served preserved him. Then made they a great fire, and did off his clothes and the haire of his back, and then this dead man, the hermite, said unto them, 'Weene yee to burne mee? it shall not lie in your power, nor to perish mee as much as a thred, and there were any upon my body.' 'No,' said one of them, 'it shall be assaied.' And then they spoyled him, and put upon him this shirt, and threw him in the

[1] *This dead man.*—It seems to have been not an uncommon circumstance in the Middle Ages for a knight to become a monk, and afterwards to quit his habit and resume his arms in defence of his family. See, for a curious example, the history of Guichard de Beaulieu, in Walter Mapes de Nugis Curialium, which resembles somewhat the story in our text.

fire, and he lay al that night till it was day in that fire, and yet was he not dead. And so on the morrow I came and found him dead, but I found neither thred nor skinne perished, and so tooke him out of the fire with great feare, and laid him here as ye may see. And now yee may suffer me to goe my way, for I have told you the truth." And then he departed with an horrible tempest. Then was the good man and sir Launcelot more gladder then they were before; and then sir Launcelot dwelled with the good man that night. "Sir," said the good man, "be ye not sir Launcelot du Lake?" "Yea, sir," said he. "What seeke ye in this countrey?" said the good man. "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "I goe to seeke the adventures of the sanegreall." "Well," said hee, "seeke it may yee well, but though it were here, ye shall have no power to see it, no more then a blind man should see a bright sword, and that is long of your sinne, and else were ye more abler then any man living." And then sir Launcelot began to weepe. Then said the good man, "Were yee confessed sith ye entred into the quest of the sanegreall?" "Ye," said sir Launcelot. Then on the morrow, when the good man had sung his masse, they buried the dead man. Then said sir Launcelot, "Father, what shall I doe?" "Now," said the good man, "I require you take this haire that was this holy mans, and put it next your skinne, and greatly it shall prevaile you." "Sir, and I will doe it," said sir Launcelot. "And I charge you," said the good man, "that yee eate no flesh as long as yee bee in the quest of the holy sanegreall, nor ye shall drinke no wine, and that ye heare masse dayly, and ye may doe it." So he tooke the haire, and put it upon him, and so he departed at even-song time; and so he rode into a forrest, and there he met with a gentlewoman riding upon a white palfrey; and shee asked him, "Sir knight, whether ride yee?" "Certainly, damosell," said sir Launcelot, "I wot not whether I ride, but as fortune leadeth me." "Ah, sir Launcelot," said she, "I wot

what adventure ye seeke, for ye were afore time more nearer then ye be now, and yet shall ye see it more openly then ever ye did, and that shall ye understand in short time." Then sir Launcelot asked her where hee might bee harbowred that night. "Yee shall none find this day nor night, but to morrow ye shall find good herborow, and ease you of that yee bee in doubt of." And then he commended her unto God. Then hee rode till that he came to a crosse, and tooke that for his hoast[1] as for that night.

CHAP. LXI.—Of a vision that sir Launcelot had, and how he told it to an hermit, and desired counsaile of him.

AND hee put his horse to pasture, and tooke off his helme and his shield, and made his prayers to the crosse that he might never againe fall in deadly sinne. And so hee laid him downe to sleepe, and anon, as he was asleepe, it befell him that he had a vision, that him thought there came a man before him all becompassed[2] of starres, and that man had a crowne of gold on his head, and that man led in his fellowship seaven kings and two knights, and all these worshipped the crosse kneeling upon their knees, holding up their hands toward heaven, and all they said, "Faire, sweete Father of heaven, come and visit us, and yeeld unto us everieach as we have deserved." Then sir Launcelot looked up to heaven, and him seemed that the clouds opened, and that an old man came downe with a company of angells and alight among them, and gave unto everieach his blessing, and called them his servants and good and true knights. And when this old man had said thus, hee came to one of those knights and said, "I have lost all that I have set in thee, for thou hast ruled thee against mee as a warriour,

[1] *And tooke that for his hoast.*—i. e. he slept under the protection of the cross by the wayside.

[2] *Becompassed.—Alle by compas of sterres,* Caxton.

and used wrong warres with vaine-glory, more for the pleasure of the world then to please me; therefore thou shalt be confounded, without thou yeeld me my treasure." Al this vision saw sir Launcelot at the crosse. And on the morrow hee tooke his horse, and rode till midday, and there by adventure he met with the same knight that tooke his horse, his helme, and his sword, when hee slept when the sanegreall appeared afore the crosse. And when sir Launcelot saw him, hee saluted him not faire, but cried on high, "Knight, keepe thee, for thou hast done to mee great unkindnesse." And then they put before them their speares, and sir Launcelot came so fiersly upon him, that he smote him and his horse downe to the earth, that he had almost brooken his necke. Then sir Launcelot tooke the knights horse that was his owne before hand, and descended from the horse that hee sat upon, tooke his horse, and tied the knights owne horse to a tree, that hee might find that horse when hee was risen. Then sir Launcelot rode till night, and by adventure he met an hermite, and each of them saluted other, and there hee rested with that good man all night, and gave his horse such as hee might get. Then said the good man unto sir Launcelot, "Of whence be ye?" "Sir," said he, "I am of king Arthurs court, and my name is sir Launcelot du Lake, that am in the quest of the sanegreall, and therfore I pray you to counsaile me of a vision the which I had at a crosse." And so he told him all.

CHAP. LXII.—How the hermit expounded to sir Launcelot his vision, and told him that sir Galahad was his sonne.

OW, sir Launcelot," said the good man, "there thou mightest have understand the high linage that thou art come off, and thy vision betokneth this: After the passion of Jesu Christ fortie yeares, Joseph of Arimathy preached the victorie of king

Evelake, that hee had in the battaile the better of his enemies, and of the seaven kings and the two knights; the first of them is called Napus, a right holy man; and the second hight Nacien, in remembrance of his grandsire, and in him dwelled our Lord Jesu Christ; and the third was called Helias le Grose; and the fourth hight Licias;[1] and the fifth hight Jonas, hee departed out of his countrey and went into Wales, and tooke the daughter of Manuell, whereby he had the land of Gaule, and hee came to dwell in this countrey, and of him came king Launcelot thy grandsire, which there wedded the kings daughter of Ireland, and hee was as worthy a man as thou art, and of him came king Ban thy father, the which was the last of the seaven kings. And by thee, sir Launcelot, it signifieth that the angells said that thou were none of the seven fellowships. And the last was the ninth knight, hee was signified to a lyon, for he should passe al manner of earthly knights, that is sir Galahad, which thou begat upon king Pelles daughter, and thou ought to thanke God more then any other man living; for of an earthly sinner thou hast no pear in knighthood, nor never shal be, but little thank hast thou given unto God for all the great vertues that God hath lent thee." "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "yee say that the good knight is my sonne." "That oughtest thou to know," said the good man, "and no man better, for thou knewest the daughter of king Pelles fleshly, and on her thou begatest Galahad, and that was hee that at the feast of Pentecost sat in the siege perilous; and therefore make thou it knowen openly that hee is one of thy begetting on king Pelles daughter, for that will bee thy worship and honour unto thy kindred, and I counsaile you in no place presse not upon him to have to doe with him." "Well," said sir Launcelot, "me seemeth that good knight should pray for me unto the high Father that I fall not to sinne againe." "Trust thou well," said the good man, "that thou farest

[1] *Licias.—Lysays*, Caxton.

much the better for his prayer, but the sonne shall not beare the wickednesse of the father, nor the father shall not beare the wickednesse of the sonne, but everyeach shall beare his owne burthen, and therefore pray thou onely unto God, and hee will helpe thee in all thy needs." And then sir Launcelot and he went to supper, and laid him to rest, and the haire pricked so sir Launcelots skinne, that it grieved him full sore, but he tooke it meekly, and suffered the paine; and so on the morrow he heard his masse, and tooke his armes, and so tooke his leave.

CHAP. LXIII.—How sir Launcelot justed with many knights, and how hee was taken.

AND then hee mounted upon his horse, and rode into a forrest, and held no hie way. And as he looked afore him, he saw a faire plaine, and beside that plaine stood a faire castle, and before that castle were many pavilions of silke and of divers hew. And him seemed that hee saw there five hundred knights riding on horsebacke, and there was two parties. They that were of the castle were all in blacke, their horses and their trappours black; and they that were without were all upon white horses with white trappours. And everyeach hurled to other, whereof sir Launcelot mervailed greatly. And at the last him thought that they of the castle were put unto the worst; and then thought sir Launcelot for to helpe the weaker part, in encreasing of his chivalry. And so sir Launcelot thrust in among the parties of the castle, and smote down a knight both horse and man to the earth; and then he rashed here and there, and did mervailous deeds of arms; and then hee drew out his sword, and strooke many knights to the earth, so that all those that saw him mervailed that ever one knight might doe such deedes of armes. But alway the white knights held them nigh about sir Launcelot, for to weary him and winne him.

And at the last, as a man may not ever endure, sir Launcelot waxed so faint of fighting and of traveling, and was so weary of great deedes, that hee might not lift up his armes for to give one strooke, so that hee wend never to have borne armes. And then all they tooke him, and led him away into a forrest, and there they made him to alight and to rest him; and then al the fellowship of the castle were overcome for the default of him. And then they said all unto sir Launcelot, "Blessed be God that yee bee now of our fellowship, for wee shall hold you in our pryson;" and so they left him, with few words. And then sir Launcelot made great sorrow, and said, "Never or now was I at turneyment nor justs, but that I had the better, and now I am shamed." And then he said, "Now I am sure that I am more sinfuller then ever I was." Thus he rode sorrowing, and halfe a day he was in despaire, till that hee came into a deepe valey; and when sir Launcelot saw hee might not ride up into the mountaine, he alighted there under an apple tree, and there hee left his helme and his shield, and put his horse to pasture, and then hee laid him downe to sleepe, and then him thought there came an old man before him, which said, "Ah, sir Launcelot, of evill faith and poore beleeve, wherfore is thy will turned so lightly[1] toward thy deadly sinne?" And when he had thus said, he vanished away, and sir Launcelot wist not where he became. Then he armed him, and took his horse; and as he rode that way, he saw a chappell where was a recluse, which had a window that shee might see up to the alter, and all aloud she called sir Launcelot, because he seemed a knight arraunt. And then he came, and she asked him what he was, and of what place, and what he seeked.[2]

[1] *Lightly.*—Quickly, readily.
[2] *What he seeked.—Whereaboute he wente to seke,* Caxton.

CHAP. LXIV.—How sir Launcelot told his vision unto a woman, and she expounded it unto him.

AND then he told her altogether word by word, and the truth how it befell him at the turneiment; and after hee told her his vision that hee had that night in his sleepe, and praied her for to tell him what it might meane, for hee was not well content with it. "Ah! sir Launcelot," said shee, "as long as yee were knight of earthly knighthood, yee were the most mervailous man of the world and the most adventurous. Now," said the lady, "sith that yee bee set among the knights of heavenly adventures, if adventure fell the contrary at that turneiment, have thou no mervaile, for that turneyment yesterday was but a tokening of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not for then there was none enchantment, for they at the turneyment were earthly knights. The turneiment was a token for to see who should have most knights, either Eliazar the sonne of good king Pelles, or Augustus[1] the sonne of king Harlon; but Eliazar was all clothed in white, and Augustus was clothed in blacke, the which were come. All what this betokneth I shall tell thee. On the day of Pentecost, when king Arthur held his court, it befell that earthly kings and knights took a turneyment together, that is to say, the quest of the sanegreall. The earthly knights were they the which were clothed all in blacke, and the covering betokneth the sinnes whereof they bee not confessed; and they with thee covering of white betokneth virginitie, and they that choose chastitie, and thus was the quest begun in them. Then thou beheldst the sinners and the good men; and when thou sawest the sinners overcome, thou enclinest unto that part, for bobance[2] and pride of the world, and all that must be left in the quest. For in this quest thou shalt have many fellowes

[1] *Augustus.*—*Argustus*, Caxton.
[2] *Bobance.*—Boasting; vaunting.

and thy betters, for thou art so feeble of evill trust and good beleeve. This made it when thou were there where they tooke thee and led thee into the forrest. And anon there appeared the sanegreal unto the white knights, but thou were so feeble of good beleeve and faith that thou might not abide it, for all the teaching of the good man, but anon thou turned unto the sinners; and that caused thy misadventure, that thou shouldest know good from evill, and the vaineglorie of the world, the which is not worth a peare. And for great pride thou madst great sorrow that thou hadst not overcome all the white knights with the covering of white, by whome was betokened virginitie and chastitie, and therefore God was wroth with thee, for God loveth not such deeds in his quest. And this vision signifieth that thou were of evill faith and poore beleeve, the which will make thee to fall into the deepe pit of hell, if thou keepe thee not. Now have I warned the of thy vaineglory and of thy pride, that thou hast many times erred against thy master.[1] Beware of everlasting paine, for of all earthly knights I have most pittie of thee, for I know well thou hast not thy peere of any earthly sinfull man." And so she commanded sir Launcelot to dinner. And after dinner hee commended her unto God, and tooke his horse, and so rode into a deepe valey, and there he saw a river and an high mountaine, and through the water he must needs passe, the which was full hidious, and then, in the name of God, he tooke the water with a good heart. And when he came over, he saw an armed knight, horse and man as blacke as any beare, and without any word speaking, hee smote sir Launcelots horse to the earth, and so hee passed forth and wist not where hee became. And then hee tooke his helme and his shield, and thanked God of his adventure.

[1] *Master.—Ageynst thy maker,* Caxton.

CHAP. LXV.—How sir Gawaine was nigh wery of the quest of the sancgreall, and of his mervailous dreame.

NOW when sir Gawaine was departed from his fellowship, he rode long without any adventure; for hee found not the tenth part of adventures as hee was wont to doe. For sir Gawaine roode from Whitsunday unto Michaelmasse, and all that while could he find none adventure that pleased him. So upon a day it befell that sir Gawaine met with sir Ector de Maris, and either of them made great joy of other, so that it were mervaile to tell. And they two talked the one unto the other, and complained them greatly that they could find none adventures. "Truly," said sir Gawaine unto sir Ector, "I am nigh weary of this quest, and loth I am to follow any further." "One thing mervaileth me," said sir Ector, "I have met with twentie knights fellowes of mine, and they all complaine as I do." "I mervaile," said sir Gawaine, "where sir Lancelot your brother is." "Truely," said sir Ector, "I cannot heere of him, nor of sir Galahad, sir Percivale, nor of sir Bors." "Let them be," said sir Gawaine, "for they foure have no earthly peares. And if one thing were not in sir Launcelot, he had no fellow of none earthly man; but hee is as we bee, but if that he tooke more paine uppon him. But and if all these foure knights be met together, they will bee loth that any men met with them; for if those knights faile of the sancgreall, it is in wast of all the remnant of us knights of the round table to recover it." Thus sir Ector de Maris and sir Gawaine rode more then eight days together. And upon a Saturday they found an old chappell, the which was al towasted and broken, that it seemed that no man repaired thither, and there they alighted, and set their speares at the chappell doore, and there those two knights entred into the chappell, and there they were in their oreisons a great

while. And soone after they set them downe in the sieges[1] of the chappel. And so as sir Ector and sir Gawaine speake of one thing and of other, for heavinesse they fell on sleepe; and there befell them both full strange and mervailous adventures in dreaming. And first of sir Gawaine, him seemed that hee came into a meddow full of herbes and floures, and there hee saw a racke of buls, to the number of an hundred and fifty, the which were proud and blacke, save three of them were white, and one of the three had a blacke spot; and the other two were so faire and so white that they might be no whiter; and these three buls which were so faire were tied with two strong cords. And the remnant of the buls said among them: "Let us goe hence to seeke better pasture." And so some went, and some came againe, but they were so leane that they might not stand upright; and of the buls that were so white, that one came againe and no mo; but when this white bul was come againe, among these other, there arose up a great cry for lacke of wind that failed them; and so they departed, one heere and another there. This vision befell sir Gawaine that night.

CHAP. LXVI.—Of the vision that sir Ector de Maris had, and how hee justed with sir Uwaine les Avoutres his sworne brother.

UT to sir Ector de Maris befell an other vision, the contrary. For it seemed him that his brother sir Launcelot and hee alighted out of one chaire and lept upon two horses; and the one said unto the other, "Go wee to seeke that we shall not find?" And him thought that a man beate sir Launcelot and dispoiled him, and clothed him in an other array, the which was all full of knots, and set him upon an asse. And so hee road till hee came to the fairest well that ever hee saw. And then sir Launcelot alighted, and

[1] *Sieges.*—Seats.

would have drinken of that well; and when he stooped to drinke of that water, the water sanke from him; and when sir Launcelot saw that, he returned and went thither from whence hee came.[1] And in the meane while, thus alway sleeping, sir Ector dreamed that his brother sir Launcelot roade unto the time they came to a rich mans house where as at that time was a wedding, and there hee saw a king, that said, "Sir knight, heere is no place for you." And then hee turned againe unto the chaire that he came from. Thus within a little while both sir Gawaine and sir Ector awaked out of their sleepe. And each of them told other of their vision, the which mervailed them greatly. "Truly," said sir Ector, "I shall never be mery till I heere tidings of my brother sir Launcelot." Now as they sate thus talking, they saw an hand shewing unto the elbow, and the hand was covered with red samit, and upon the same hand hung a bridell not rich; and held within the fist a great candle which brent full cleare, and so passed before them and entred into the chappell; and then it vanished away, and they wist not where it became. And anon there came downe a voice which said unto them, "Knights full of evill faith and poore of beleeve, these two things have failed you, and therefore yee may not come unto the adventures of the holy sancgreall." Then first spake sir Gawaine, and said, "Sir Ector, have yee heard these words?" "Ye truely," said sir Ector, "I have heard all. Now goe we," said sir Ector, "unto some hermit that will tell us of our vision, for it seemeth me wee labour all in vaine." And then they departed and road into a valey, and there they met with a squier that roade upon a hackney, and they saluted him faire and courteously. "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "can yee teach us unto any hermit?" "Here within a little mountaine is one,"

[1] *From whence hee came.—And wente thyder as the hede came fro,* Caxton; i. e. towards the source of the stream. See further on, p. 120, where Caxton has *thyder from whens he came.*

said the squier; "but it is so rough that there may no horse go thither, and therefore yee must goe on foote; but there shall yee find a poore house, and there is Nacien the hermit, which is the holyest man in all this countrey." And so they departed either from other. And then they came in a valey, where as they met with a knight well armed, which proffred them to just as farre as hee saw them. "In the name of God," said sir Gawaine, "sith I departed from Camelot, there was not one that proffred me to just but once." "Now sir," said sir Ector, "let me just with him." "Nay," said sir Gawaine, "yee shall not, but if I be beaten, it shall not forethinke me then if yee goe after me." And then either of them dressed to other for to just, and came together as fast as their horses might runne, and brake their shields and their mayles, and that one more then that other; and sir Gawaine was wounded in the left side; but the other knight was smitten through the brest, and the speare came out on the other side, and so they fel both out of their sadeles downe to the ground, and in the faling they brak both their speares. Then anon sir Gawain arose, and set his hand unto his sword, and cast his shield before him; but all for nought was it, for the knight had no power for to arise against him. Then said sir Gawaine "Ye must yeeld you as an overcome man, or else I may sley you." "Ah, sir knight," said hee, "I am but dead, for Gods sake and of your gentlenesse lead me heereby unto an abbey, that I may receive my creatour." "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "I know no house of religion heereby." "Sir," said the knight, "set mee upon a horse before, and I shall teach you the way." Then sir Gawaine set him up in the sadell. And so sir Gawaine lept upon the same horse behind him for to susteine him. And so long they rode till they came to an abbey, where as they were received; and anon this hurt knight was unarmed, and received his creatour and maker. Then this knight that was wounded to death praied sir Gawaine to draw out

of his body the trunchion of the speare. Then sir Gawaine asked him what manner of knight he was, and what was his name, as hee that knew him not. Then the hurt knight answered, "I am," said hee, "of king Arthurs court, and have beene a fellow of the round table, and thou and I were sworne bretheren together, and now, sir Gawaine, thou hast slaine mee; and wit you well that my name is sir Uwaine le Avoutres, which sometime was sonne unto king Urience, and have laboured me in the quest of the sanc-greall, as thy selfe, sir Gawaine, and many other knights have done; and my death I pray to God he will forgive it thee; for now from hence foorth it shall bee said that the one sworne brother hath slaine the other."

CHAP. LXVII.—How sir Gawaine and sir Ector came unto an hermitage for to be confessed, and how they shewed to the hermit their visions.

LAS!" said sir Gawaine, "that ever this misadventure is thus befallen me." "No force," said sir Uwaine, "sith I shal die this death, of a more worshipfuller mans hands might I not die; but when yee come unto the court, recommend me unto my lord king Arthur, and unto all those of the round table that be left alive; and for the old brotherhood thinke on mee." Then sir Gawaine began to weepe, and in likewise did sir Ector. And then sir Uwaine himselfe and sir Gawaine together drew out the trunchion of the speare, and anon the soule departed from the body. Then sir Gawaine and sir Ector right worshipfully buried him as men ought to bury a kings sonne, and made his name to bee written upon his tombe, and by whom hee was slaine. So then departed sir Gawaine and sir Ector, as heavie as they might be for their misadventure; and so they rode till that they came unto the rough mountaine, and there they tied their horses, and went on foote unto the hermitage. And when

they come up, they saw a poore house, and beside the chappell there was a little courtlage,[1] whereas Nacien the hermite gathered worts,[2] as he that had tasted none other meat of a great while. And when he espied the arraunt knights, hee came toward them and full curteously saluted them, and they him againe. "Faire lords," said the hermite, "what adventure hath brought you hither?" "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "to speak with you for to bee confessed." "Sirs," said the hermite, "I am ready." Then they told him so much that he wist well what they were; and then hee thought for to counsaile them if hee might. Then began sir Gawaine first, and told him of his vision which hee had in the chappell; and sir Ector told him all as it is before reharsed. "Sir," said the hermite unto sir Gawaine, "the faire medow and the racke therein ought to bee understanded the round table, and by the medow ought to be understood humilitie and pacience. Those be the things that be alwaies greene and quicke, for men may not at no time surmount nor overcome humilitie and patience; therefore was the round table ordained and found. And the chivalry hath beene at all times, so by the fraternitie and brotherhood which was there that she might not be vanquished nor overcome; for men said that she was founded in patience and in humilitie. And at the racke did eate an hundred and fiftie bulls; but they eate not in the medow because their hearts should bee set and grounded of humilitie and patience, and all those bulls were very proud and blacke, except only three. By the bulls is to understand the fellowship of the round table, which for their great sinnes and for their outragious wickednesse be blacke; blacknesse is for to say without good and vertuous works. And the three which were white buls, except onely one the which was bespotted, the two white bulls betoken sir Galahad and sir Percivale, for they two be maidens, cleane

[1] *Courtlage.*—An enclosed court or garden.
[2] *Worts.*—Herbs; plants.

without any spot or wemme; and the third that had a spot signifieth sir Bors de Ganis, which trespassed never but once in his virginitie, but ever sithence hee kept himselfe so well in chastitie, that all his offence is forgiven him and his misdeedes. And wherefore those three were tied by their necks, for because that they be three knights in virginitie and in chastitie, and there is no manner of pride smitten in them. And all the blacke bulls which said, 'Go we hence,' they were those which at Pentecost at the high feast tooke upon them to goe in the quest of the holy sanegreal without any confession, they might not enter into the medow of humilitie and patience; and therefore they returned into the wast countries, that signifieth death, for there shall die many of them, everyeach of them shall sley other of them for sinne, and they that shall escape shall bee so leane, that it shall bee great mervaile to see them: and of the three bulls without spot, the one shall come againe and the other two never."

CHAP. LXVIII.—How the hermite Nacien expounded their vision.

THEN spake the hermite Nacien unto sir Ector de Maris: "Sooth it is that sir Launcelot and ye are coming downe of one chaire; the chaire betokeneth mastership and lordship, the which ye came downe from. But ye two knights," said the hermite, "ye goe to seeke that yee shall never find, which is the sanegreall, for it is the secret thing of the Lord Jesu Christ. What is to meane, that sir Launcelot fell downe from his horse? Hee hath left pride," said the hermite, "and hath taken him unto humilitie, for he hath cryed mercie for all his sinnes, and hath sore repented him; and our Lord hath visited and clothed him in his clothing, the which is full of knots, that is hard haire that he weareth dayly; and the asse that he rode upon is a beast of humilitie, for God would not ride upon no steede nor upon no palfrey. So in ensample that an asse betokneth meeke-

nesse that thou sawest sir Launcelot thy brother ride upon in thy sleepe dreaming. And also the well where as the water sanke from him when he should have taken thereof, and when hee saw that hee might not have it, hee returned thether from whence hee came; for the well betokeneth the high grace of God, the more that men desire to take it the more shall be their desire. So when he came nigh unto the sancgreall, he meeked him as he that held him not a man worthy to be so nigh the holy vessell, for hee had beene so defouled in deadly sinne by the space of many yeares; yet when he kneeled downe for to drink of the well, there hee saw great providence of the sancgreall; and because he had served so long the devill, he shall have vengeance twentie foure dayes long, for that he hath beene the devills servant twentie-foure yeares; and then soone after hee shall returne unto Camelot out of this countrey, and there shall he say a part of such things as he hath found.

"Now will I tell you what betokneth the hand with the candle and the bridle. That is to understand the Holy Ghost, where as charitie is ever, and the bridle signifieth abstinence; for when she is bridled in a christian mans heart, she holdeth him so short that he falleth not into deadly sin; and the candle which sheweth clearnesse and light signifieth the right way of our Lord Jesu Christ." And then he went and said, "Knights of poore faith and wicked beleeve, these three things faileth, chastitie, abstinence, and truth, therefore yee may not attaine that high adventure of the holy sancgreall."

CHAP. LXIX.—Of the good counsaile that the hermite gave unto them.

ERTAINLY," said sir Gawaine, "soothly have yee said, and that feele I openly. Now I pray you, good man and holy father, tell me why we met not with so many adventures as wee were wont to doe, and commonly have the better?" "I shall

tell you," said the good man; "the adventure of the sanc-greall, which ye and many other have undertaken the quest thereof, and find it not, the cause is, for it appeareth not to sinners; wherfore marvaile not though yee faile thereof, and many other, for yee are an untrue knight and a great murtherer, and to good men signifieth other things then murther. For I dare well say, as sinfull as sir Launcelot hath beene, sith that hee went in the quest of the sanc-greall hee never slew man, nor none shall till the time he come to Camelot againe; for he hath taken upon him to forsake sinne; and were not that hee is unstable, but by his thought he is like to turne againe, should be next to achieve it, save sir Galahad his sonne. But God knoweth well his thought and his unstablenesse, and yet shall hee die a full holy man; and no doubt he hath no fellow of no earthly sinful man." "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "it seemeth mee by your words that for our sinnes it will nothing availe us to travaile in this quest." "Truely," said the good man, "there be an hundred such as yee bee that never shall prevaile but to have shame." And when they heard these words, they commended him to God. Then the good man called againe sir Gawaine, and said, "It is long time passed sith that yee were made knight, and never sith thou served thy maker, and now thou art so old a tree that in thee is neither leafe nor fruit, wherefore bethinke thee that thou yeeld unto our Lord the bare rinde, sith the feend hath the leaves and the fruit." "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "and I had leasure I would speak with you, but my fellow here sir Ector is gone before, and abideth mee yonder beneath the hill." "Well," said the good man, "thou were better to be counselled." Then sir Gawaine departed, and came to sir Ector, and so they tooke their horses, and rode till they came to a fosters house, which harbowred them right well. And on the morrow they departed from their hoast, and rode long or they could find any adventure.

CHAP. LXX.—How sir Bors met with an hermite, and how hee was confessed unto him, and of the pennance that was enjoyned him.

SO when sir Bors was departed from Camelot, he met with a religious man riding upon an asse, and sir Bors saluted him. And anon the good man knew full well that hee was one of the knights arraunt that was of the quest of the sanegreal. "What are ye?" said the good man. "Sir," said sir Bors, "I am a knight that faine would bee counsailed in the quest of the sanegreall; for hee shall have much earthly worship that may bring it to good end." "Certainly," said the good man, "that is sooth, for he shal bee the best knight of the world, and the fairest of all the fellowship; but wit yee well, there shall none attaine it but by cleannesse, that is pure confession." So rode they together till they came to an hermitage, and there hee praied sir Bors to dwell all that night with him; and so hee alighted, and put away his armour, and prayed him that hee might bee confessed. And so they went both into the chappell, and ther he was cleane confessed, and they eate bread and dranke water together. "Now," said the good man, "I pray thee that thou wilt eate none other till thou sit at the table whereas the sanegreall shall bee." "Sir," said sir Bors, "I agree mee thereto; but how wot ye that I shall sit there?" "Yes," said the good man, "that know I well, but there shall bee but few of you felowes with you." "All is welcome," said sir Bors, "that God sendeth me." "Also," said the good man, "instead of a shirt, and in signe of chastisement, yee shall were a garment, thereof I pray you do off all your clothes and your shirt." And so hee did. And then hee tooke him a scarlet coate, so that should bee in stead of a shirt, till that hee had fulfilled the quest of the sanegreall. And the good man found him in so mervailous a life and so stable, that hee mervailed thereof, and felt that hee was never corrupt in fleshly lusts, but in

one time that hee begat Heline le Blanke. Then hee armed him and tooke his leave, and so departed; and so a little from thence hee looked up into a tree, and there he saw a passing great bird upon an old tree, and it was passing drie, without any leaves. And the bird sat above and had birds, the which were dead for hunger; so smote hee himselfe with his bill, the which was great and sharpe, and so the great bird bled till that he died among his birds; the young birds betooken the life by the blood of that great bird. When sir Bors saw this, he wist wel it was great tokening; for when he saw that the great bird did not arise, then hee tooke his horse and rode forth his way. So about evensong time, by the adventure, he came unto a strong toure and an hie, and there was hee lodged gladly.

CHAP. LXXI.—How sir Bors was lodged with a lady, and how hee tooke upon him for to fight against a champion for her land.

AND when hee was unarmed, they led him into an high toure wher was a lusty young lady and a faire; and shee received him with great joy, and made him to sit downe by her. And so hee was set to his supper with flesh and many dainties. And when sir Bors saw that, hee bethought him of his pennance, and bad a squier to bring him water; and so he did as he was bidden, and hee made sopps therein and eate them. "A!" said the lady, "I trow yee like not my meate." "Yes, truely," said sir Bors, "God thanke you, madame, but I may eat no other meate this day." Then she speake no more as at that time, for shee was loth to displease him. Then after supper they speake of one thing and other. With that there came a squier, and said, "Madame, yee must purvey you to morrow for a champian, for else your sister will have this castle, and also your lands, except yee can find a knight that will fight to morrow in your quarrell against sir Pridan le Noire." Then she

made great sorrow, and said, "Ah! Lord God, wherfore graunt you to hold my land whereof I should now be disherited without reason and right?" And when sir Bors had heard her say thus, hee said, "I shall comfort you." "Sir," said she, "I shall tell you. There was here a king that hight Aniause, the which held al this land in his keeping; so it mishapned that hee loved a gentlewoman, a great deale elder then I am, so hee tooke unto her all his land in keeping, and all his men to governe, and shee brought up many evill customes, whereby shee put to death a great part of his kinsmen. And when he saw that, hee let chase her out of this land and betooke it to me, and all this land in my guiding. But anon as this worthy king was dead, this other lady began to war upon mee, and hath destroyed many of my men and turned them against me, that I have wel nigh no men left. And I have nought else but this high toure that she left me, and yet she hath promised me that she will have this toure, without I can find a knight to fight with her champion." "Now tell mee," said sir Bors, "what is that sir Pridan le Noire?" "Sir," said she, "he is the most doubted man of this land." "Now may yee send her word that yee have found a knight that shall fight with that sir Pridan le Noyre in Gods quarell and yours." Then the lady was not a little glad, and sent word that shee was purvaied. And that night sir Bors had good cheere, but in no bed would he come, but laid him on the floure, nor never would hee doe otherwise till hee had met with the quest of the sancgreall.

CHAP. LXXII.—Of a vision that sir Bors had that night, and how hee fought and overcame his adversary.

AND then anon as hee was on sleepe him befell a vision; him thought there came to him two birds, the one was as white as any swanne and that other was mervailous black, but it was not

so great as that other, but in the likenesse of a raven. Then the white bird came to him, and said, "If thou wouldst give me meat and serve me, I should give thee all the riches of the world, and I shal make thee as faire and as white as I am." So the white bird departed and went away. And then there came to him the blacke bird, and said, "And thou wilt serve me to morrow and have me in no dispite, though I be blacke, for wite thou well that more availeth my blacknesse then the others whitnesse." And then shee departed, and he had another vision. Him thought that he came unto a great place, which seemed a chappell, and there hee found a chaire set on the left side, which was worme-eaten and feeble; and on the right hand were two flowers like to lillies, and the one would have taken from the other her whitnesse, but a good man parted them, that the one touched not the other, and then out of every floure came many floures and fruit great plentie. Then him thought the good man said, "Should not hee doe great folly, that would let these two floures perish for to succour the rotten tree that it fell not to the ground?" "Sir," said he, "it seemeth me that this might not availe." "Now keepe thee well," said the good man, "that thou never see such an adventure befall thee." Then sir Bors awaked, and made the signe of the crosse in the mids of his forehead, and so hee arose and clothed him. And there came the lady of the place, and shee saluted him, and sir Bors her againe; and so they went to a chappell and there heard their service. And anon there came a company of knights that the lady had sent for, for to leade sir Bors unto battaile. Then sir Bors asked his armour; and when he was armed, shee praied him for to take his refection.[1] "Nay, madame," said hee, "that shall I not do till I have done my battaile, by the grace of God." And so hee lept upon his horse, and so departed all the knights and men with

[1] *His refection.—She prayd hym to take a lytyl morsel to dyne,* Caxton.

him. And as soone as these ladies met together, shee which sir Bors should fight for complained to her, and said, "Madame, yee have done me great wrong to bereve me of my lands that king Aniause gave me, and full loth I am there should bee any battaile." "Yee shall not chose," said the other lady; "or else your knight shall withdraw him." Then there was the crie made, which partie that had the better of those two knights, his lady should make all the lands to rejoyce.[1] Now departed the one knight here, and the other there; then they came together with such a randome that they perced their shieldes and their hauberkes, and their speares flew in pieces, and they wounded either other sore. Then hurled they together so that they fell both to the ground, and their horses betweene their legs. And anon they arose and set their hands to their swords, and smote each other upon the heads that they made great wounds and deepe, that the blood ranne downe by their bodies; for there found sir Bors more greater defence in that knight then hee wend, for that sir Priden was a full good knight, and hee wounded sir Bors full evill, and hee him againe. But ever this sir Priden held the stoure[2] in like hard.[3] That perceived sir Bors, and suffered him till hee was nigh attaint, and then he ranne upon him more, and the other went backward for dread of death. So in his withdrawing hee fell upright, and sir Bors drew his helme so strongly that he rent it from his head, and gave him great strookes with the flat of his sword upon the visage, and bad him to yeeld him, or else he should sley him. Then hee cried him mercy, and said, "Faire knight, for Gods love sley me not, and I shall ensure thee never more to warre against thy lady, but alway shall bee toward her." And sir Bors let him bee. Then the old lady fled with all her knights.

[1] *To rejoice.—That his lady shold rejoyce alle the lande,* Caxton; i. e. enjoy. *Make* should probably be *have.*

[2] *Stoure.*—Battle; assault. [3] *In like hard.*—Equally hard.

CHAP. LXXIII.—How the lady was restored unto her lands by the battaile of sir Bors, and of his departing, and how hee met sir Lionell taken and beaten with thornes, and also of a maide which should have beene defloured.

SO then came sir Bors unto all that held lands of his lady, and said that he should destroy them but if they did such service unto her as belonged to her lands. So they did their homage, and they that would not were chaced out of their lands. Then it befell that young lady to come to her estate again by the mighty prowesse of sir Bors de Ganis. So when all the countrey was set in peace, then sir Bors tooke his leave and departed, and shee thanked him greatly, and would have given him great riches, but he refused it. Then hee rode all that day till night, and came unto an herborow unto a lady which knew him well enough, and made of him great joy. And on the morrow, as soone as the day appeared, sir Bors departed from thence, and so rode into a forrest unto the houre of midday; and there befel him a mervailous adventure. So hee met at the departing of two wayes two knights that led sir Lionell his brother all naked bound upon a strong hackney, and his hands bound before his brest, and every each of them held in his hand thornes wherewith they went beating him so sore that the blood trailed downe in more then an hundred places of his body, so that hee was all bloody before and behind. But he said never a word, as hee which was great of heart, he suffered all that they did to him as though hee had felt none anguish. Anon sir Bors dressed him for to rescew him that was his brother. And so hee looked on the other side of him, and saw a knight which brought a faire gentlewoman, and would have set her in the thickest place of the forrest for to have beene the more surer out of the way from them that sought him. And she which was no thing assured, cried with an high voice, "Saint Mary, succour your

maide." And anon she espied where as sir Bors de Ganis came riding. And when hee came nigh her, shee deemed that he was a knight of the round table, wherefore she hoped to have had some comfort. And then she conjured him by the faith that hee ought to him "in whose service yee are entred, and for the faith that yee owe to the high order of knighthood, and for the noble king Arthurs sake, which, as I suppose, made you a knight, that you helpe me, and suffer me not to be shamed of this knight." When sir Bors heard her say thus, he had much sorrow, that hee wist not what to doe. "For if I let my brother be in adventure hee must be slaine, and that would I not for all the earth; and if I helpe not the maide, shee is shamed for ever, and also she leaseth her virginitie, the which shee shall never get againe." Then lift hee up his eyes and said, al weeping, "Faire sweet Lord Jesu Christ, whose liege-man I am, keepe sir Lionell my brother, that none of these knights sley him; and for pittie of you and of your ladies sake I shall succour this maide."

CHAP. LXXIV.—How sir Bors left to rescew his brother and went to rescew the damosell, and how it was told that sir Lionell was dead.

AND so hee dressed him unto the knight the which led the gentlewoman, and then he cried to him, "Sir knight, lay your hand off that maide, or else yee be but dead." And then the knight set downe the maide, and was all armed at all peeces, save hee lacked his speare; then he dressed his shield, and drew out his sword, and sir Bors smote him so hard that it went through his shield and haberjon[1] on the left shoulder, and through great strength sir Bors beate him downe to the earth; and at the pulling out of sir Bors speare there hee sowned. Then came sir Bors to the

[1] *Haberjon.*—The breastplate.

maide, and said, "How seemeth it you of this knight? yee be delivered of him at this time." "Now," said she, "I pray you leade mee there as this knight had mee." "I shall gladly doe it," said sir Bors, and tooke the horse of the wounded knight, and set the gentlewoman upon him, and brought her there as shee desired to be. "Sir knight," said shee, "ye have better sped then ye weend, for if I had lost my maidenhead, five hundred men should have died for it." "What knight was he that had you in the forrest?" said sir Bors. "By my faith," said she, "he is my cosin; so wot I not with what engin[1] the feend enchafed him, for yesterday he tooke me from my father prively; for I nor none of my fathers men mistrusted him. And if he had taken from mee my maidenhead, he should have died for the sinne, and his body shamed and dishonoured for ever." As shee stood thus talking with him, there came twelve knights seeking after her; and anon shee told them all how sir Bors had delivered her. Then made they great joy, and besought him to come to her father, a great lord, and he should bee right welcome. "Truely," said sir Bors, "that may not bee at this time, for I have a great adventure to doe in this countrey." So hee commended them to God and departed. So then sir Bors rode after sir Lionell his brother by the trace of their horses; thus hee rode seeking a great while. Then he overtooke a man which was clothed in a religious clothing, and rode upon a strong blacke horse, blacker then a beare,[2] and said, "Sir knight, what seeke ye?" "Sir," said sir Bors, "I seeke my brother that I saw within a little space agoe beaten with two knights." "Ah! sir Bors, discomfort you not nor fall into any vaine hope,[3] for I shall tell you tidings such as they be, truly he is dead." Then he shewed him a new slaine body lying in a thicke bush, and it seemed him well that it was the body of sir Lionell; and then hee made

[1] *Engin.*—Craft. [2] *Beare.*—*A bery*, Caxton.
[3] *Vaine hope.*—*Wanhope*, Caxton.

such sorrow that hee fell to the ground in a sowne, and lay there a great while. And when hee came to himself againe, hee said, "Faire brother, sithence the company of you and mee is departed shall I never have joy at my heart, and now he that I have taken unto my master he be my helpe." And when hee had said thus, hee tooke up the body in his armes and put it upon the arson of his saddle.[1] And then hee said unto the man, "Canst thou tell me the way unto some chappell, where that I may bury this body?" "Come on," said the man, "here is one fast by." And so long they rode till they saw a faire tower, and before it there seemed an old feeble chappell; and then they alighted both, and put him into a tombe of marble.

CHAP. LXXV.—How sir Bors told his dreame which hee had dreamed unto a priest, and of the good counsaile that the priest gave him.

NOW leave we him here," said the good man, "and goe we unto harbour till to morrow, and then will we come hither againe to doe him service." "Sir," said sir Bors, "be ye a priest?" "Yea, forsooth," said he. "Then I pray you," said sir Bors, "that ye will tell me a dreame which befell mee the last night." "Say on," said hee. Then sir Bors began to tell him of the great bird in the forrest, and after told him of his birds, one white, another blacke, and of the rotten tree, and of the white flowers. "Sir," said the priest, "I shall tell you a part now, and the other deale to morrow. The white foule betokneth a gentlewoman faire and rich, which loved thee as paramour, and hath loved thee long, and if thou warne[2] her love, she shall goe die anon, if thou have no pittie on her; that signifieth the

[1] *Arson of his saddle.*—The bow of the saddle. In old times the bows of the saddle, behind and before, were made very large and high, and it was easy to attach bulky articles to them.

[2] *Warne.*—Forbid; refuse.

great bird, the which shall make thee for to warne her. Now for no feare nor for no dread that thou hast of God, thou shalt not warne her, but thou wouldest not doe it for to bee holden chast, for to conquer the praise and the vaine-glory of the world. For that shall befall thee now if thou warne her, that sir Launcelot the good knight thy cosin shall die; and therefore men shall now say that thou art a mansleyer, both of thy brother sir Lionell and of thy cosin sir Launcelot du Lake, the which thou mightest have saved and rescewed full easily, but thou weenest to rescew a maide which pertaineth no thing to thee. Now looke thou whether it had beene greater harme of thy brothers death, or else to have suffered her for to have lost her maidenhead." Then he asked him, "Hast thou heard the tokens of thy dreame the which I have told to thee?" "Yee, forsooth," said sir Bors, "all your exposition and declaration of my dreame I have well understood and heard." Then said the man in the black cloathing, "Then is it in my default if sir Launcelot thy cosin die?" "Sir," said sir Bors, "that were me loth, for wit ye well there is nothing in the world but I had leaver doe it then to see my lord sir Launcelot to die in my default." "Choose yee now the one or the other," said the good man. And then he led sir Bors into an high tower, and there hee found knights and ladies; those ladies said hee was welcome. And so they unarmed him, and, when he was in his doublet, men brought him a mantell furred with ermines, and put it about him. And then they made him good cheare, that he had forgotten all his sorrow and anguish, and only set his heart in these delights and dainties, and tooke no more thought for his brother sir Lionell, neither for sir Launcelot his cosin. And anon came out of a chamber to him the fairest lady that ever hee saw, and more richer beseene then ever he saw queene Guenever or any other lady of estate. "Loe, sir Bors," said they, "here is the lady to whom we all owe our service, and I trow she be the richest lady and

the fairest of the world, and the lady which loveth you best above all other knights, for shee will have no knight but you." And when he understood that language, he was all abashed; not for then shee saluted him, and hee her. And then they sat downe together, and spake of many things, in so much that she besought him to be her love, for she had loved him above all earthly men, and she should make him richer then ever was man of his age. When sir Bors understood her words, hee was right evill at ease, which in no manner would not breake his chastitie, so hee wist not how to answere her.

CHAP. LXXVI.—How the devill in a womans likenesse would have had sir Bors to have layen by her, and how by Gods grace he escaped.

LAS!" said shee, "sir Bors, shall yee not doe my will?" "Madame," said sir Bors, "there is no lady in the world whose will I will fulfill as of this thing, for my brother lieth dead which was late slaine." "Ah! sir Bors," said shee, "I have loved you for the great beautie I have seen in you, and the great hardinesse I have heard of you, that needs ye must lye by me this night, and therefore I pray you graunt it mee." "Truely," said sir Bors, "I shall not doe it in no manner of wise." Then she made such sorrow as though she would have died. "Well, sir Bors," said shee, "unto this have ye brought me nigh to mine end." And therwith shee tooke him by the hand, and bad him behold her, "and yee shall see how I shall die for your love." "Ah!" said sir Bors, "that shall I never see." Then shee departed, and went up into a high battilment, and led with her twelve gentlewomen. And when they were above, one of the women cried and said, "Ah! sir Bors, gentle knight, have mercy on us all, and suffer my lady to have her will; and if yee doe not, wee must suffer death with our

lady, for to fall downe from this high tower; and if yee suffer us to die for so little a thing, all ladies and gentlewomen will say of you dishonour." Then sir Bors looked upward, and they seemed all ladies of great estate and riches and well beseene. Then had he of them great pittie, not for that he was counsailed within himselfe, that lever then he had lost his soule they had all lost their soules; and so with that they fell downe all at once unto the earth. And when hee saw that sodaine chance, he was right sore abashed, and had thereof right great mervaile. And with that he blessed his body and his visage, and anon he heard a full great noyse and a great crie, as though all the feends of hell had beene about him; and therewith hee saw neither tower, nor lady, nor gentlewomen, nor no chappell where he did bring his brother unto. Then held hee up both his hands to heaven, and said, "Faire father God, I am right grievously escaped." And then hee tooke his armes and his horse, and rode forth his way. Then hee heard a clocke smite on his right hand, and thither hee came to an abbey on his right hand closed with high walls, and there hee was let in. Then they supposed that he was one of the quest of the sanegreall, so they led him into a chamber and unarmed him. "Sir," said sir Bors, "if that there bee any holy man in this house, I pray you let me speake with him." Then one of them led him unto the abbot, which was in a chappell, and then sir Bors saluted him, and hee him againe. "Sir," said sir Bors, "I am a knight arraunt," and told him all the adventure that he had seene. "Sir knight," said the abbot, "I wot not what yee bee, for I wend never that a knight of your age might have beene so strong in the grace of our Lord Jesu Christ; not for then yee shall goe unto your rest, for I will not counsaile you this day, it is to late, and to morrow I shall counsaile you as I can."

CHAP. LXXVII.—Of the holy communication of an abbot unto sir Bors, and how the abbot counsailed him.

AND that night was sir Bors richly served; and on the morrow early he heard masse, and then the abbot came to him and bad him good morrow, and sir Bors to him againe; and then hee told him that hee was a fellow of the quest of the sanegreall, and how hee had charge of an holy man to eat bread and water. "Then our Lord Jesu Christ shewed him unto you in likenesse of a soule that suffred great anguish for us sith hee was put upon the crosse, and bled his heart blood for mankind. There was the token and the liknesse of the sanegreall that appeared before you, for the blood that the great foule[1] bled revived the cheekins from death to life, and by the bare tree is betokned the world, which is naked and without fruit, but if it come of our Lord Jesu Christ. Also the lady for whom yee fought for, and king Aniause, which was lord there before, betokneth Jesu Christ, which is king of the world; and that yee fought with the champion for the lady, this it doth beetoken, for when yee tooke the battaile for the lady, by her yee shall understand the new law of Jesu Christ and holy church; and by the other law yee shall understand the old law and the feend, which all day warreth against the holy church, for yee did the battaile with right; for yee bee Jesu Christs knights, therfore yee ought to bee defenders of the holy church. And by the blacke bird might bee understood the holy church, which saith 'I am black,' but shee is right faire and beautifull; and by the white bird that yee saw might men understand Sathan, the feend of hell; and I shall tell you, the swanne[2] is white without, and blacke

[1] *The great foule.*—See before, pp. 123, 124.

[2] *The swanne.*—I am not aware from whence this odd idea of the quality of the swan was taken.

within; it is hipocrisie which is without yealow or pale, and seemeth without in manner and condition the very servants of Jesu Christ, but they be within an horrible filth and sinne, and begile the world full evill. And when the feend appeared to thee in the liknesse of a man of religion, and blamed thee that thou left thy brother for a lady, so led thee where thou seemed thy brother was slaine, but hee is yet on live, and all was for to put the in errour, and bring thee unto vaine hope [1] and leachery, for hee knew that thou were tender hearted, and all was for thou shouldest not find the blessed adventure of the sanegreall. And the third foule betokneth the strong battaile against the faire ladies, which were all divels. Also the drie tree and the white lilly, the dry tree betokneth thy brother sir Lionell, which is dry without vertue, and therefore many men ought to call him the rotten tree and the worme-eaten tree, for he is a murtherer, and doth contrary to the order of knighthood. And the two white floures signifie two maidens, the one is a knight which was wounded the other day, and the other is the gentlewoman which yee rescewed; and why the other floure drew nigh the other, that was the knight which would have defouled her and himselfe both. And, sir Bors, yee had beene a great foole, and in great perill, to have seene those two floures perish for to succour the rotten tree, for and they had sinned together, they had beene damned, and for that yee rescewed them both, men might call you a very knight and servant of Jesu Christ."

CHAP. LXXVIII.—How sir Bors met with his brother sir Lionell, and how sir Lionell would have slaine sir Bors his brother.

THEN went sir Bors from thence, and commended the abbot unto God, and then hee rode all that day, and harbowred with an old lady. And on the morrow hee rode unto a castle in

[1] *Vaine hope.*—Caxton, *wanhope*; i. e. despair.

a valey, and there he met with a yeoman going a great pace towards a forrest. "Tell mee," said sir Bors, "canst thou tell mee of any adventure?" "Sir," said he, "heere shall bee under this castle a great and a mervailous turneyment." "Of what folkes shall it bee?" said sir Bors. "The earle of Plaines shall be on the one part, and the ladies nephew of Hervin on the other part." Then sir Bors thought to bee there, if hee might meet with his brother sir Lionel, or any of his fellowship which were in the quest of the sancgreall. And then he turned to an hermitage that was in the entry of the forrest, and when hee was come thither, he found ther sir Lionel his brother, which sate all armed at the entrie of the chappell doore, for to abide there harborow till upon the morrow that the turneiment should bee. And when sir Bors saw him, hee had great joy of him, that it was mervaile to tell of his great joy; and then hee alighted off his horse, and said, "Faire brother, when came yee hither?" Anon as sir Lionell saw him, hee said, "Ah, sir Bors, yee may not make none avant,[1] but, as for you, I might have been slaine; when yee saw two knights leading mee away beating mee, yee left me for to succour a gentlewoman, and suffred me in perill of death, for never before did no brother to another so great an untruth; as for that misdeede, I now ensuere you but death, for yee have right well deserved it, therfore keepe thee from henceforth, and that shall yee find as soone as I am armed." When sir Bors understood his brothers wrath, hee kneeled downe to the earth and cried him mercy, holding up both his hands, and prayed him to forgive him his[2] evill will. "Nay," said sir Lionell, "that shall never bee, and I may have the higher hand, that I make a vow to God thou shalt have but death for it, for it were pitty yee lived any longer." Right so hee went and tooke his harneis, and mounted upon his horse, and came afore him, and said, "Sir Bors, keepe thee from mee, for I shall doe to thee as I should doe to a felon or a trai-

[1] *Avant.*—Boast. [2] *His.*—i. e. sir Lionell's.

tour, for thou art the untruest knight that ever came out of so worthie a house as was king Bors de Ganis, which was our father, therefore start upon thy horse, and so shalt thou bee most at thine advantage; and but if thou doe so, I will runne upon thee there as thou standest on foot, and so the shame shall bee mine, and the harme thine, but of that sinne ne recke I not." When sir Bors saw that hee must fight with his brother or else to die, he wist not what to doe. Then his heart counsailed him not so to doe, in as much as sir Lionell was borne or hee, wherefore he ought to beare him reverence; yet kneeled he downe afore sir Lionels horse feet, and said, "Faire brother, have mercy upon me, and sley me not, and have in remembrance the great love which ought to bee betweene us twaine." What sir Bors said sir Lionell cared not, for the feend had brought him in such a will that hee should sley him. When sir Lionell saw he would none otherwise doe, and that hee would not rise to give him battaile, hee rushed over him, so that hee smote sir Bors with his horse feete upward to the earth, and hurt him so sore, that hee sowned of distresse, the which felt in himselfe to have died without confession. So when sir Lionell saw this, hee alight from his horse for to have smitten off his head; and so hee took him by the helme, and would have rent it from his head. Then came the hermit running unto him, which was a good man and of great age, and well had hee heard all the words that were betweene them both, and so fell downe upon him.[1]

CHAP. LXXIX.—How sir Colgrevance fought against sir Lionell for to save sir Bors, and how the hermit was slaine.

THEN said hee unto sir Lionell, "Ah, gentle knight, have mercy on me and on thy brother, for if thou sley him thou shalt be dead in sinne, and that were sorrowfull, for he is one of the wor-

[1] *Fell downe upon him.—Upon syre Bors,* Caxton.

thiest knights of the world, and one of the best condicioned." "Now, so God me helpe," said sir Lionell, "sir priest, but if you flee from him I shall sley you, and hee shall never the sooner bee quit." "Certainely," said the good man, "I had leaver that yee sley me then him, for of my death shall not bee great harme, not halfe so much as of his." "Well," said sir Lionell, "I am agreed," and set his hand to his sword, and smote him so hard that his head went backward. Not for then hee strained him not of his evill will, but tooke his brother by the helme and unlaced it, to have stricken off his head, and had slaine him without faile, but it hapned that sir Colgrevance, a knight of the round table, came at that time thither, as it was our Lords will; and when hee saw the good man slaine, hee mervailed much what it might bee. And then he beheld how sir Lionell would have slaine his brother, and knew sir Bors, which hee loved right well. Then start he downe, and tooke sir Lionell by the shoulders, and drew him strongly back from sir Bors, and said, "Sir Lionell, will ye sley your brother, one of the worthiest knights of the world? that ought no good man to suffer." "Why," said sir Lionell, "will ye let mee? therefore if ye entermit you in this I shall sley you and him after." "Why," said sir Colgrevance, "is this sooth that yee will sley him?" "Sley him I will," said he, "who saith the contrary; for he hath done so much against me that he hath well deserved it;" and so ranne upon him, and would have smitten him through the head. And sir Colgrevance ranne betweene them, and said, "And yee be so hardy to doe so any more, we two shall meddle together." When sir Lionell understood his words, hee put his shield afore him, and asked him what he was. And he told him Colgrevance, one of his fellowes. Then sir Lionell defied him, and gave him a great strooke through the helme; then hee drew his sword, for hee was a passing good knight, and defended him right manfully. So long endured the battaile, that sir Bors arose up all anguishously,

and beheld sir Colgrevance the good knight fight with his brother for his quarrell. Then was hee full sorrie and heavie, and thought if that sir Colgrevance sley him that was his brother, hee should never have joy, and if his brother slew sir Colgrevance, the shame should ever be his. Then would he have risen for to have departed them, but he had not so much might to stand on his feete; so he abode so long that sir Colgrevance had the worse, for sir Lionell was of great chivalrie and right hardy, and had pierced his hawberke and the helme, so that hee abode but death, for hee had lost so much of his blood that it was marvaile that hee might stand upright. Then hee beheld sir Bors, which sate dressing him upward, and said, "Ah, sir Bors, why come ye not to cast mee out of perrill of death, wherein I have put mee to succour you, which were right now nigh the death?" "Certainly," said sir Lionell, "that shall not availe you, for none of you shall be others warrant, but that yee shall die both of my hands." When sir Bors heard that, hee arose, and put on his helme. Then perceived he first the hermit priest which was there slaine; then made hee a mervailous sorrow upon him.

CHAP. LXXX.—How sir Lionell slew sir Colgrevance, and how after hee would have slaine his brother sir Bors.

THEN oft cried sir Colgrevance upon sir Bors, and said, "Why will yee let mee die for your sake? if it please you that I die for you, the death will please mee better to save a worthy man." With that sir Lionell smote off his helme. When sir Colgrevance saw that hee might not escape, then hee said, "Faire Lord Jesu Christ, of that I have misdone have mercy upon my soule, for such sorrow that my heart suffereth for goodnesse and for almes-deedes that I would have done, be to mee alegement of pennance unto my soules health." At these words sir Lionell smote him so sore

that he beare him to the earth. So when he had slaine sir Colgrevance, he ranne upon his brother as a feendly[1] man, and gave him such a strooke that hee made him stoope. And hee that was full of humilite prayed him for Gods sake to leave this battaile, "For and it befell, faire brother, that I slew you, or yee me, we should be dead of that sinne." "Never, God helpe, if I have on thee mercy if I may have the better," said sir Lionell. Then sir Bors drew his sword, all weeping, and said:

"Faire brother, God knoweth mine entent. Ah, faire brother, yee have done full evill to day to sley such an holy priest, the which never trespassed against you; also yee have slaine a gentle knight and one of our fellowes; and well ye wot that I am not greatly afeard of you, but I dread the wrath of God, and this is an unkindly warre, therefore, Lord God, I beseech thee shew some miracle upon us. Now God have mercy upon mee, though I defend my life against my brother." With that sir Bors lifted up his sword, and would have stricken his brother.

CHAP. LXXXI.—How a voice was heard that charged sir Bors not to touch him, and of a cloud that came betweene them.

THEN heard hee a voice that said, "Flee, sir Bors, and touch him not, or else thou shalt sley him." Right so alighted a cloud betweene them in the likenesse of a fire, and a mervailous flame, that both their shields brent. Then were they sore afraid, so that they fell both to the earth, and lay there a great while in a sowne; and when they came to themselves, sir Bors saw that his brother had no harme, then hee held up his hands, for hee dread sore that God had taken vengeance upon him. With that he heard a voice say, "Sir Bors, goe hence, and beare thy brother no longer fellowship, but take thy way anon right to the sea, for sir Per-

[1] *Feendly.*—Diabolical; fiendish.

civale abideth thee there." Then hee said to his brother, "Brother, forgive me, for Gods love, all that I have trespassed against you." Then he answered, "God forgive it thee, and I doe." So sir Bors departed from him, and rode the next way to the sea; and at the last, by fortune, he came to an abbey which was nigh the sea. That night sir Bors rested him there; and in his sleepe there came a voice unto him, and bad him go to the sea. He start up, and made the signe of the crosse on his forehead, and tooke his harneis, and made ready his horse, and mounted upon him, and at a brooken wall he rode out, and hee rode so long till that he came to the sea. And upon the strand hee found a ship covered all with white samite,[1] and there he alighted, and tooke him unto Jesu Christ; and as soone as hee entred into the ship, the shippe departed into the sea, and went so fast that him seemed the ship went flying, but it was anon so darke that he might not see nor know no man. And so he slept till it was day; then he awaked, and saw in the middest of the ship a knight all armed save his helme, and then hee knew that it was sir Percivale de Galis, and then hee made of him right great joy. But sir Percivale was all abashed of him, and asked him what hee was. "Ah, faire sir," said sir Bors, "doe yee not know me?" "Certainely," said he, "I mervaile how ye came hither, but if our Lord brought you hither himselfe." Then sir Bors smiled, and did off his helme; and then sir Percivale knew him, and either made of other great joy, that it was marvaile to heare. Then sir Bors told him how that he came into the ship, and by whose admonishment; and either told other of their temptations, as yee have heard before. So went they downeward into the sea, one while backward and another while forward, and each comforting other, and oft were in their prayers. Then said sir Percivale, "Wee lacke nothing now but the good knight sir Galahad."

[1] *Samite.*—This word has been explained before, see vol. i. p. 54.

CHAP. LXXXII.—How sir Galahad fought at a turnement, and how he was knowen of sir Gawaine and sir Ector de Maris.

AS saith the historie, that when sir Galahad had rescewed sir Percivale from the twentie knights, hee rode into a vast forrest, wherein he rode many journies,[1] and found there many adventures, which he brought to an end.[2] Then hee tooke his way to the sea on a day, and it befell that he passed by a castle where was a turnement; but they without had done so much that they within were put to the worse, yet they within were knights good enough. And when sir Galahad saw that those within were at so great a mischiefe that men slew them at the entry of the castle, then he thought to helpe them, and put forth his speare, and smote the first that hee fell to the earth, and the speare brake all to peeces; then he drew his sword, and smote there as they were thickest, and so hee did there wonderfull deedes of armes, that they all mervailed thereof. Then it hapned that sir Gawaine and sir Ector de Maris were with the knights without; but when he espied the white shield with the red crosse, the one said to the other, "Yonder is the good knight sir Galahad; now he should be a great foole that would meete with him to fight." So by adventure he came by sir Gawaine, and he smote him so hard that he cleave his helme, and the coyfe of the iron unto his head, so that sir Gawaine fell to the earth; but the strooke was so great, that it slanted downe to the earth, and carved the horse shoulder in two. When sir Ector saw sir Gawaine downe, he drew him aside, and thought it no wisdome for to abide him, and also for naturall love, because hee was his uncle. Thus through his great hardinesse hee beate backe all the knights without; and then they within came out and chased them all about. But when sir Galahad saw

[1] *Journies.*—Days.
[2] *An end.*—Caxton adds, *wherof the story maketh here no mencyon.*

that there would none turne againe, hee stole away prively, so that no man wist where he became. "Now by my head," said sir Gawaine unto sir Ector, "the words are true that were said of sir Lancelot du Lake, 'that the sword which stuck in the stone should give me such a buffet, that I would not have it for the best castle that is in the world,' and certainely now it is proved true, for never before had I such a strooke of a mans hand." "Sir," said sir Ector, "mee seemeth your quest is done." "And yours is not," said sir Gawaine, "but mine is done, I shall seeke no further." Then sir Gawaine was borne into a castle, and unarmed him, and laid him in a rich bed, and a leach[1] found that hee might live and bee whole within a moneth. Thus sir Gawaine and sir Ector abode together, for sir Ector would not away till sir Gawaine were whole. And the good knight sir Galahad rode so long till that he came that night to the castle of Carbnecke.[2] And it befell him that he was benighted in an hermitage; and so the good man was full glad when he saw that he was a knight arraunt. So when they were at rest, there came a gentlewoman knocking at the doore, and called sir Galahad. And so the good man came to the doore to wit what shee would. Then shee called the hermite, "Sir Ulfin, I am a gentlewoman that would speake with the knight that is with you." Then the good man awaked sir Galahad, and bad him "arise, and speake with a gentlewoman which seemeth hath great need of you." Then sir Galahad went to her and asked her what shee would. "Sir Galahad," said shee, "I will that yee arme you, and mount upon your horse, and follow me, for I wil shew you within these three dayes the hiest adventure that ever any knight saw." Anon sir Galahad armed him, and tooke his horse, and commended him to God, and bad the gentlewoman goe, and hee would follow there as shee liked.

[1] *Leach.*—A physician. [2] *Carbnecke.*—*Carboneck*, Caxton.

CHAP. LXXXIII.—How sir Galahad rode with a damosell, and came into a shippe where as sir Bors and sir Percivale were in.

SO the damosell rode as fast as her palfrey might gallop, til that shee came to the sea that was called Collibe. And at night they came unto a castle in a valley, that was closed with running water, and with high and strong wals. And she entred into the castle with sir Galahad, and there had hee great cheere, for the lady of that castle was the damosels lady. So when he was unarmed, the damosell said to her lady, "Madam, shall we abide heere this night?" "Nay," said shee, "but till he hath dined and slept a little." So hee eate and slept a while, till that the maide called him, and armed him by torch-light; and when the maide and hee were both horsed, the lady tooke sir Galahad a faire shield and a rich. And so they departed from the castle, and rode till they came to the sea-side, and there they found the ship where sir Bors and sir Percivale were in, the which cried on the ship-board, "Sir Galahad, ye be welcome, wee have abiden you long." And when he heard them, he asked them what they were. "Sir," said the damosell, "leave your horse heere, and I shall leave mine;" and tooke their saddles and their bridles with them, and made a crosse on them, and so entred into the ship. And the two knights both received them with great joy, and everyeach knew other. And so the wind arose, and drove them through the sea unto a mervailous place, and within a while it dawned. Then sir Galahad tooke off his helme and his sword, and asked of his fellowes from whence the faire ship came. "Truly," said they, "yee wot as well as wee, but of Gods grace." And then they told everyeach to other of their adventures, and of their great temptation. "Truely," said sir Galahad, "yee are much bounden to God, for yee have escaped great adventures. And had not the gentlewoman beene, I had not come

hither; for as for you, I wend never to have found you in this strange countries." "Ah, sir Galahad," said sir Bors, "if that sir Launcelot your father were here, then were we well at ease, for then me seemeth we should lacke nothing." "That may not be," said sir Galahad, "but if it please our Lord." And by then the ship went from the land of Logris,[1] and by adventure it arrived up betweene two rokes passing great and mervailous, but there they might not land, for there was a swalow of the sea,[2] save there was another ship, and upon it they might goe without danger. "Go we thither," said the gentlewoman, "and there shall wee see adventures, for so it is our Lords will." And when they came thither they found the ship rich enough, but they found neither man nor woman therin; but they found in the end of the ship two faire letters written, which said a dreadfull word and a mervailous: "Thou man which shall enter into this ship, beware thou be in stedfast beeliefe, for I am faith, and therefore beware how thou entrest, for and thou faile I shall not helpe thee." Then said the gentlewoman, "Percival, wot ye what I am?" "Certainly," said he, "not to my witting."[3] "Wit ye well," said shee, "I am thy sister, that am daughter of king Pellinore, and therefore wit yee well that yee are the man in the world that I most love; and if yee bee not in perfect beleefe of Jesu Crist, enter not in no manner of wise, for then should ye perish in the ship, for it is so perfect it will suffer no sinne in it." And when sir Percivale knew that she was his sister, he was inwardly glad and said, "Faire sister, I shal enter therein, for if I be a misse creature or an untrue knight, ther shall I perish."

[1] *Logris.*—Loegria, the name given, as has been stated before, to that part of our island which was occupied by the Teutonic invaders, and is now called England.

[2] *Swalow of the sea.*—A whirlpool.

[3] *Witting.*—Knowing.

CHAP. LXXXIV.—How sir Galahad entred into the ship, and of a faire bed that was therein, with other mervailous things, and of a sword.

IN the meane while sir Galahad blessed him, and entred therein, and then next the gentlewoman, and then sir Bors and sir Percivale. And when they were therein, they found it so mervailous faire and rich, that they had great mervaile thereof. And in the middest of the ship was a faire bed, and sir Galahad went thereto, and found there a crowne of silke, and at the feete was a sword faire and rich, and it was drawne out of the scabbard halfe a foote and more, and the sword was of divers fashions, and the pummell was of stone, and there was in it all manner of coulours that any man might find, and every one of the coulours had divers vertues, and the scales of the haft were of two ribs of divers beasts. The one beast was a serpent which was conversant in Calidone,[1] and is caled the serpent of the feend; and the bone of him is of such a vertue, that there is no hand that handleth it shall never be weary or hurt. And the other beast is a fish, which is not right great, and haunteth the flood of Eufrates; and that fish is called ertanax; and his bones be of such a manner of kind that who that handleth them he shall have so much courage that he shall never be weary, and he shall not thinke on joy nor sorrow that he hath had, but onely the thing which hee beholdeth before him. And as for this sword, there shall never no man begripe it the handle but one, but he shall passe all other. "In the name of God," said sir Percivale, "I shall assay to handle it." So he set his hand to the sword, but he might not begripe it. "By my faith," said hee, "now have I failed." Sir Bors set his hand to it, and failed. Then sir Galahad

[1] *In Calidone.*—The forest of Calydon, which is supposed to have occupied the northern part of our island, is very celebrated in the romances of king Arthur and of Merlin.

beheld the sword, and saw the letters as red as blood, that said, "Let see who shall assay to draw me out of my scabbard, but if he bee more hardier then other, and who that draweth mee, wit ye well that he shall never faile of shame of his body or be wounded unto the death." "By my faith," said sir Galahad, "I would draw this sword out of the scabbard, but the offending is so great that I shall not set my hand thereto." "Now sir," said the gentlewoman, "wit yee well that the drawing of this sword is warned unto all men save unto you. Also this ship arrived in the relme of Logris, and that time was deadly warre betweene king Labor, which was father unto the maimed king, and king Hurlame, which was a Sarasin; but then was he newly christned, so that men held him afterward one of the wittiest men of the world.

"And so upon a day it befell that king Labor and king Hurlame assembled their folke upon the sea where this shippe was arrived, and there king Hurlame was discomfited and all his men slaine, and hee was afeard to be dead, and fled to his ship; and there hee found this sword, and drew it, and came out and found king Labour, the man in world of all Christendome in whom was then the greatest faith. And when king Hurlam saw king Labor, hee drew his sword and smote him upon the helme so hard that hee clave him and his horse to the earth with the first strooke of his sword. And it was in the realme of Logris. And so befell great pestilence, and great harme to both realmes. For sith encreased corne nor grass, nor well nigh no fruite, nor in the water was no fish, wherefore men call it the lands of the two marches, the wast land for the dolorous strooke. And when king Hurlame saw that this sword was so kerving, he returned againe to fetch the scabbard, and so cam into this ship, and entred and put the sword into the scabbard; and as soone as hee had done so, hee fell downe dead before the bed. Thus was the sword proved, that none that drew it but hee were dead or maimed. So lay he there

till a maide came into the ship, and cast him out, for there was no man so hardy of the world to enter into that ship for the defence."

CHAP. LXXXV.—Of the mervailes of the sword and of the scabbard.

AND then beheld they the scabbard, which seemed to be of a serpents skinne, and thereon were letters of gold and silver; and the girdell was but poorely to account, and not able to sustaine such a rich sword, and the letters said, "Hee that shall weld mee ought to bee more hardier then any other, if that hee beare me as truely as I ought to be borne; for the body of him which I ought to hang by, hee shall not be shamed in no place while hee is girded with this girdle, nor never none shall be so hardy to doe away this girdle, for it ought not to bee done away but by the hands of a maide, and that shee be a kings daughter and a queenes, and shee must bee a maide all the dayes of her life both in will and in deede, and if shee brake her virginitie, shee shall die the most vilainous death that ever did any woman." "Sir," said sir Percivale, "turne this sword, that wee may see what is on the other side, and it was as red as blood with blacke letters as any cole, which said, "He that shal praise me most, most shall he find mee to blame at a great necessitie, and to whom I shall be most debonaire shall I be most felon, and that shall be at one time." "Faire brother," said she unto sir Percivale, "it befell about fortie yeare after the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ, that Naeien, the brother-in-law of king Mordrains, was borne into a towne more then fouretene daies journey from his countrey, by the commandement of our Lord, into an isle in the parts of the west, that men call the Isle of Turnance. So it befell that hee found this ship at the entre of a roch, and therin found hee this bed, and the sword as we have heard now; not for then hee had not so much hardinesse to drawe it.

And ther hee dwelled an eight dayes, and at the ninth day there fell a great wind, that departed him out of the ile, and brought him to another ile by a roch, and there hee found the greatest giaunt that ever man saw. Therewith came that horrible giaunt for to sley him; and then hee looked about him, and might not flie, and hee had nothing for to defend him with. So he ranne to this sword, and, when he saw it naked, hee praised it much, and then hee shooke it, and therewith he bracke it in the middes. 'Ah,' said Nacien, 'the thing that I most praised ought I now most to blame.' And therewith hee threw the pieces of the sword over this bed.

"And after he lept over a broke[1] for to fight with the giaunt, and slew him. And anon hee entred into the ship againe, and then the wind arose and drove him through the sea, that by adventure hee came unto another ship whereas king Mordrains was in, the which had beene tempted full evill with a feend in the port of a perillous roch; and when the one saw the other they made great joy the one of the other, and either told other of their adventures, and how the sword failed him at his most need. When king Mordrains saw the sword, he praised it much, 'but the breaking was not to doe but by wickednesse of thy selfe, for thou art in some sinne.' And there hee tooke the sword, and set the peeces together, and they sodred together as faire as ever they were before; and there he put the sword in the scawberde, and laid it downe upon the bed. Then heard they a voice that said, 'Go out of this ship a little while, and entre into the other ship, for dread yee fall into deadly sinne, for if yee be found in deadly sinne yee may not escape, but perish.' And so they went into the other ship. And as Nacien went over the board, he was smitten with a sword on the right foote, that hee fell downe nooseling[2] to the ships bord, and therwith hee said, 'O Lord God, how am I hurt!' And then ther came a voice and said, 'Take thou

[1] *A broke.—Over the bord,* Caxton. [2] *Nooseling.*—On his nose.

that for thy forfit that thou didst in drawing of this sword, therefore thou receivest a wound, for thou were never worthy to handle it, the writing maketh mention.'" "In the name of God," said sir Galahad, "yee are right wise in these works."

CHAP. LXXXVI.—How king Pelles was smitten through both the thighs because he drew the sword, and of mervailous histories.

SIR," said shee, "ther was a king that hight Pelles the maimed king, and while hee might ride hee supported much Christendome and the holy church. So upon a day he hunted in a wood of his which lasted unto the sea, and at the last hee lost his hounds and his knights, save onely one. And ther hee and his knight went till that they come toward Ireland, and ther hee found the ship. And when hee saw the letters and understood them, yet hee entred, for hee was right perfect of his life, but his knight had no hardnesse to enter; and ther found hee this sword, and drew it out as much as yee may see. So therwithall entred a speare, wherwith hee was smitten through both his thighs, and never sith might hee bee healed, nor nought shall before wee come to him." Thus said shee: "Was not king Pelles your grandsire maimed for his hardinesse?" "In the name of God, damosell," said sir Galahad. So they went toward the bed, to behold al about it, and above the beds head there hung two faire swords. Also there were two spindels, which were as white as any snow, and there were other that were as red as any blood, and other above as greene as any emeraud. Of these colours were the spindels, and of naturall colour within, and without any painting. "These spindels," said the damosell, "were when sinfull Eve[1] came

[1] *Sinful Eve.*—There are several mediæval legends relating to Adam and Eve, most of which are probably of eastern origin. According to some accounts, the slip of the tree of knowledge which Eve took out of Paradise and planted, produced the timber of which the cross was made.

to gather fruite, for which Adam and shee were put out of Paradise, shee tooke with her the bought on which the aple hung. Then perceived shee that the braunch was faire and greene, and she remembred her of the losse that came from the tree, then she thought to keepe the braunch as long as shee might; and because shee had no coffor to keepe it in, shee put it into the ground. So by the will of our Lord the braunch grew to a great tree within a little while, and was as white as any snow, braunches, boughs, and leaves, that it was a tooken a maide planted it. But after God came unto Adam, and bad him know his wife fleshly as nature required. So lay Adam with his wife under the same tree. And anon the tree, that was white, became as greene as any grasse, and all that came of it. And in the same time that they medled together there was Abell begotten. Thus was the tree long of greene colour. And so it befell many dayes after, under the same tree, Cain slew his brother Abell, whereof befell full great mervaile; for anon as Abell had received the death under the greene tree, it lost the greene colour and became red, and that was in tokning of the blood; and anon all the plants died thereof, but the tree grew and waxed mervailous faire, and it was the fairest tree and the most delectable that any man might behold; and so died the plants that grew out of it before the time that Abell was slaine under it. So long endured the tree till that Salomon, king Davids sonne, reigned and held the land after his father. This Salomon was wise and knew the vertues[1] of stones and of trees, and so hee knew the course of the starres, and many other things. This king Salomon had an evill wife, wherethrough hee wend that there had never beene no good woman; and so hee

[1] *Vertues.*—It is perhaps hardly necessary to state that during the Middle Ages, in the West as well as in the East, Solomon was looked upon as the prince of natural philosophers and magicians, and that various treatises on the virtues of precious stones, on talismans, on the interpretation of dreams, &c., were ascribed to him and circulated under his name.

dispised them in his books. So a voice answered him once, 'Salomon, if heavinesse come unto a man by a woman, ne recke thou never; for yet shall there come a woman wherof there shall come greater joy unto man an hundred times more then the heavinesse giveth sorrow, and the same woman shall be borne of thy linage.'

"Then when king Salomon heard these words, hee held himselfe but a foole, and the truth hee perceived by old bookes. Also the Holy Ghost shewed him the comming of the glorious Virgin Mary. Then asked he of the voice, if it should be in the yerd of his linage. 'Nay,' said the voice, 'but there shall come a man which shall bee of a pure maide and the last of your blood, and he shall be as good a knight as was duke Josue thy brother-in-law.

CHAP. LXXXVII.—How Salomon tooke Davids sword by the counsaile of his wife, and of other mervailous matters.

NOW have I certified thee of that thou stoodest in doubt.' Then was Salomon glad that there should come such a one of his linage, but ever hee mervailed and studied who that should bee, and what his name might bee. His wife perceived that hee studied, and thought that shee would know it at some season, and so she awaited her time, and asked of him the cause of his studying; and there he told her all together how the voice told him. 'Well,' said shee, 'I shall let make a shippe of the best wood and most durable that men may find.' So Salomon sent for all the best carpenters of the land, and when they had made the ship, the lady said unto Salomon, 'Sir,' said shee, 'sithence it is so that this knight ought to passe all other knights of chivalry which have beene before him, and also that shall come after him; moreover, I shall tell you,' said shee, 'yee shall goe into our lords temple, whereas is king Davids sword, your father, the which is the marvailest and the sharpest that

ever was taken in any knights hand; therefore take that, and take ye off the pomell, and thereto make yee a pomell of precious stones, that it bee so subtilly made that no man perceive it but that they bee all one; and after make an hilt so mervailously and wonderously that no man may know it; and after make a mervailous sheath; and when you have made all this, I shall let make a girdle thereto, such as shall please you.' All this king Salomon let make as she devised, both the ship and all the remnant. And when the ship was ready in the sea for to saile, the lady let make a great bed and mervailous rich, and set her upon the beds head covered with silke, and laid the sword at the beds feete; and the girdles were of hempe. And therewith was the king angry. 'Sir, wit yee well,' said shee, 'that I have none so high a thing that were worthy to sustaine so big a sword, and a maide shall bring other knights thereto, but I wot not when it shal bee, nor what time.' And there she let make a covering to the ship, of cloth of silke that shall never rot for no manner of weather. Yet went that lady and made a carpenter to come to that tree which Abell was slaine under. 'Now,' said she, 'carve me out of this tree as much wood as will make me a spindell.' 'Ah! madame,' said the carpenter, 'this is the tree the which our first mother planted.' 'Doe it,' said shee, 'or else I shall destroy thee.' Anon as the carpenter began to worke, there came out droops of blood, and then would he have left, but shee would not suffer him. And so hee tooke away as much wood as might well make a spindell; and so shee made him to take as much of the greene tree and of the white tree. And when these three spindels were shapen, shee made them to bee fastned on the seeler[1] of the bed. When Salomon saw this, he said to his wife, 'Ye have don mervailously, for though all the world were here now, they could not tell wherefore all this was made, but our Lord himselfe, and thou that hast done it

[1] *Seeler* —The celure or canopy of the bed.

wotest not what it shal betoken.' 'Now let it be,' said she, 'for ye shall heare tidings sooner then yee weene.'

CHAP. LXXXVIII.—Of the wonderfull tale of king Salomon and his wife.

THAT night lay king Salomon before the ship, with a small fellowship. And when king Salomon was on sleepe, him thought there came from heaven a great company of angels, and alighted into the ship, and tooke water, which was brought by an angell in a vessell of silver, and besprent all the shippe; and after hee came to the sword, and drew letters in the hilts, and after went to the ships board, and wrote there other letters, which said, 'Thou man that wilt enter within me, beware that thou be full within of faith, for I am but faith and beleeve.' When king Salomon espied these letters, he was sore abashed, so that he durst not enter, and so drew him backe, and anon the ship was shoven into the sea, and it went so fast that he lost the sight of it within a little while. And then a little voice said, 'Salomon, the last knight of thy linage shall rest in this bed.' Then went king Salomon and awaked his wife, and told her the adventures of the ship."

Now saith the history, that a great while the three fellowes beheld the bed and the three spindles, then they were certain that they were of naturall colours, without any manner of painting. Then they lift up a cloth which was above the ground, and there they found a rich pursse by seeming, and sir Percivale tooke it, and found therein a writing; and so hee red it, and it spake of the manner of the spindels, and of the ship from whence it came, and by whom it was made. "Now," said sir Galahad, "where shall wee find the gentlewoman that shal make new girdles to the sword?" "Faire sir," said sir Percivales sister, "dismay you not, for by the

leave of God I shall let make a girdell to the sword, such a one as shall belong thereto." And then shee opened a boxe, and tooke out girdles which were seemely wrought with golden threds, and thereupon were set full of precious stones, and a rich buckell of gold. "Loe, lords," said the gentlewoman, "here is a girdell that ought to be set about the sword; and wit yee well that the greatest part of this girdell was made of my haire, the which I loved full well while I was a woman of the world; but as soone as I wist that this adventure was ordained mee, I clipped off my haire, and made this girdell in the name of God." "Ye are well found," said sir Bors, "for truely yee have put us out of a great paine, wherein we should have entred ne had your teaching beene." Then went the gentlewoman and set it upon the girdel of the sword. "Now," said the three fellowes, "what is the right name of the sword, and what shall wee call it?" "Truely," said shee, "the name of the sword is the sword with the strange girdels, and the scabbard, mover of blood; for no man that hath blood in him shall never see the one part of the scabbard which was made of the tree of life." Then they said unto sir Galahad, "In the name of Jesu Christ, we pray you that ye gird you with this sword, which hath beene so much desired in the realme of Logris." "Now let me begin," said sir Galahad, "to gripe this sword for to give you courage; but wot yee well that it belongeth no more to mee then it doth to you." And then he griped about it with his fingers a great deale, and then shee gird him about the middle with the sword. "Now recke I not though I die, for now I hold mee one of the blessed maidens of the world, which hath made thee the worthiest knight of the world." "Faire damosell," said sir Galahad, "ye have done so much that I shall be your knight all the daies of my life." Then they went from that ship, and went into the other ship; and anon the wind drove them into the sea a great pace, but they had no vitaile. But it hapned that they came on the

morrow to a castle that men call Carteloise,[1] that was in the marches of Scotland. And when they had passed the port, the gentlewoman said, "Lords, here bee men ariven, that and they wist that yee were of king Arthurs court, yee should anon bee assaied." "Damosell," said sir Galahad, "he that cast us out of the roch shall deliver us from them."

CHAP. LXXXIX.—How sir Galahad and his fellowes came unto a castle, and how they were fought withall, and how they slew their enemies, and of other matters.

SO it befel, as they spake thus, there came a squire by them, and asked what they were; and they said they were of king Arthurs court. "Is that soth?" said he. "Now by my head," said hee, "ye are evill arived." And then returned he againe unto the chiefe[2] foretresse. And within a while they heard a horne blow. Then a gentlewoman came to them, and asked them of whence they were, and they told her. "Faire lords," said she, "returne againe if ye may, for Gods love, for ye be come to your death." "Now," said they, "we will not turne againe, for hee shall helpe us in whose service wee bee entred." Then as they stood thus talking, there came knights well armed, and bad them yeeld them, or else they would die. "That yeelding," said they, "shall be noyous[3] to you." And therewithall they let their horses runne together; and sir Percivale smote the formost to the earth, and tooke his horse, and mounted upon him, and in likewise did sir Galahad; also sir Bors served another so, for they had no horses in the country, for they had left their horses when they tooke their ship in other countreys. And so when they were horsed then they began to set upon them, and the knights of the castle fled into the

[1] *Carteloise.*—Apparently another of the fabulous localities mentioned in this romance, for I can trace no such name on the borders of Scotland.

[2] *Chiefe.*—*Clyff fortresse,* Caxton. [3] *Noyous.*—Injurious.

strongest fortresse, and the three knights followed after them into the castle, and so they alighted on foote, and with their swords slew them downe right, and gat them into the hall. So when they beheld the great multitude of people which they had slaine, they held themselves great sinners. "Certainly," said sir Bors, "I wene and God had loved them that we should not have had power to have slaine them thus, but they have done so much against our Lord that he will not suffer them to raigne no longer." "Say yee not so," said sir Galahad, "for if they misdid against God, the vengeance is not ours, but to him which hath power thereof." So came there out of a chamber a good man, which was a priest, and beare Gods body in a cup; and when he saw them which lay dead in the hall, he was al abashed, and sir Galahad put off his helme, and kneeled downe, and so did his two fellowes. "Sir," said they, "have yee no dread of us, for we be of the court of king Arthur." Then asked the good man how they were slaine so sudainly; and they told it him. "Truely," said the good man, "if yee might live as long as the world shall endure, ne might yee never have done so great an almes deede as this." "Sir," said sir Galahad, "I repent me much, in as much as they were christned." "Nay, repent yee not," said hee, "for they were not christned, and I shall tell you how I wot of this castle. Here was the earle Hernox but one yeare, and he had three sonnes, good knights of armes, and a daughter, the fairest gentlewoman that men knew; so those three knights loved their sister so sore that they burnt in love, and so they lay by her mauger her head; and because she cried to her father, they slew her, and tooke their father and put him in prison, and wounded him nigh unto the death, but a cosin of hers rescewed him. And then did they great untruth, for they slew priests and clerkes, and made to beate downe chappels, that our Lords service might not bee served nor said; and this same day their father sent to me for to bee confessed and houseled;

but such shame had never man as I had this day with the three brethren. But the earle bad mee suffer, for hee said that they should no longer endure, for three servants of our Lord God should destroy them; and now it is brought to an end. And by this may ye wit that our Lord is not displeased with your deeds." "Certainely," said sir Galahad, "and it had not pleased our Lord, never would we have slaine so many men in so little a while." And then they brought the earle Hernox out of prison into the midest of the hall, which knew sir Galahad anon, and yet had he never seene him before but by revelation of our Lord.

CHAP. XC.—How the three knights with sir Percivales sister came into the wast forrest, and of an hart and foure lyons, and of other things.

THEN began he to weepe ful tenderly, and said, "Long have I abidden your comming, but for Gods love hold me in your armes, that my soule may depart out of my body in so good a mans armes as yee bee." "Gladly," said sir Galahad. And then one said on high, that all heard it, "Sir Galahad, well hast thou avenged mee on Gods enemies; now behoveth thee to goe to the maimed king, as soone as thou mayest, for hee shall receive by thee his health, the which had biden so long." And therwith the soule departed from the body, and sir Galahad made him to bee buried as hee ought to bee. Right so departed the three knights and sir Percivales sister with them; and so they came into a wast forrest, and there they saw before them a white hart which foure lyons led. Then they tooke them to assent for to follow after for to know whether they repaired. And so they rode after a great pace, till that they came to a valey, and thereby was an hermitage where as a good man dwelled, and the hart and the lyons entred in also. So when they saw all this, they turned unto the chappell, and saw the good man in a religios weed and in the armour of our Lord,

for hee would sing mass of the holy ghost. And so they entred and heard masse; and at the secrets of that masse they three saw the hart become a man, the which mervailed them, and set him upon the alter in a rich siege, and saw the foure lyons chaunged, the one to the forme of a man, and the other unto the forme of a lyon, and the third unto an eagle, and the fourth was chaunged unto an oxe. Then tooke they their siege where as the hart sate, and went out through a glasse window, and there was nothing perished nor broken. And they heard a voice that said thus, "In such a manner entred the sonne of God into the wombe of the maide Mary, whose virginity was not perished nor hurt." And when they heard these words, they fell downe to the ground and were astonished, and therewith was a great clearenesse; and when they were come to themselves againe, they went to the good man and praied him that hee would tell them the truth. "What thing have yee seene?" said hee. And they told him all that they had seene. "Ah! lords," said hee, "yee are welcome, now wote I well yee bee the good knights the which shall bring the sanc-greall to an end, for yee bee they to whome our Lord shall shew great secrets. And well ought our Lord bee signified unto an hart; for the hart when he is old he waxeth young againe into his white skinne. Right so commeth againe our Lord from death to live, for he lost earthly flesh, that was the deadly flesh which hee had taken in the wombe of the blessed Virgin Mary, and for that cause appeared our Lord as a white hart without a spot. And the foure that were with him, is to understand the foure evangelists, which set in writing a part of Jesu Christs deeds that hee did sometime when he was among you an earthly man; for wit yee well that never erst ne[1] might no knight know the truth, for oftentimes or this our Lord shewed him unto good men and unto good knights in liknesse of an hart. But I suppose that from hence foorth yee shall see him no

[1] *Ne.*—In this and several other instances in this part of the book, the printer has turned the negative *ne*, of the original text, into *nor*.

more." And then they joyed much and dwelled there all that day; and on the morrow when they had heard masse they departed, and commended the good man unto God. And so they came unto a castle, and passed by; so there came a knight armed after, and said, "Lords, hearken what I shall say to you."

CHAP. XCI.—How they were desired of a strange custome, the which they would not obey, and how they fought and slew many knights.

THIS gentlewoman that yee led with you is a maide." "Sir," said she, "a maide I am." Then hee tooke her by the bridell, and said, "By the holy crosse, yee shall not escape mee before yee have yealded the custome of the castle."[1] "Let her goe," said sir Percivale, "yee bee not wise, for a maide in what place so ever shee commeth she is free." So in the meane while there came out of the castle a ten or twelve knights armed, and with them came a gentlewoman which held a dish of silver; and then they said, "This gentlewoman must yeald us the custome of this castle." "Sir," said a knight, "what maide that passeth hereby shall give this dish-full of blood of her right arme." "Blame have yee," said sir Galahad, "that brought up such customes, and so God me save, I ensure you that of this gentlewoman yee shall faile as long as I live." "So God mee helpe," said sir Percivale, "I had leaver bee slaine." "And I also," said sir Bors. "By my faith," said the knight, "then shall yee die, for yee may not endure against us, though yee were the best knights of the world." Then let they runne each to other, and the three fellowes beate the ten knights, and then set their hands unto their swords and beate them downe and slew them. Then there came out of the castle well a three score knights all armed. "Faire lords," said the three fellowes, "have mercy upon your selfe, and have not to do with us." "Nay, faire lords," said the knights of

[1] *Custome of the castle.*—We have had a similar custom alluded to before; see vol. i. p. 80.

the castle, "wee counsaile you to withdraw you, for yee are the best knights of the world, and therefore doe ye no more; wee will let you goe with this harme, but we must needs have the custome." "Certainely," said sir Galahad, "for nought speake yee." "Well," said they, "will ye die?" "We bee not come thereto," said sir Galahad. Then began they to meddle together, and sir Galahad with the strange girdels drew his sword, and smote on the right hand and on the left hand, and slew whom that would abide him, and did such mervaile that there was none that saw him but that they wend hee had beene none earthly man but a monster. And his two fellowes holpe[1] him passingly well, and so they held their journey[2] everieach in like hard till that it was night; then must they needes depart. So there came a good knight, and said to the three fellowes, "If ye will come in to night and take such harbour as here is, ye shall be right welcome; and we shall ensure you by the faith of our bodies, as we are true knights, to leave you in such estate to morrow as we find you, without any falshood; and as soone as ye know of the custome, we dare say that ye will accord thereto." "Therefore for Gods love," said the gentlewoman, "goe thither, and spare not for mee." "Goe we," said sir Galahad. And so they entred into the castle; and when they were alighted, they made of them great joy. So within a while the three knights asked the custome of the castle, and wherefore it was. "What it is," said they, "we will say you the truth.

CHAP. XCII.—How sir Percivales sister bled a dish full of blood for to heale a gentlewoman, whereof she died, and how the body was put into a ship.

THERE is in this castle a gentlewoman which wee have, and this castle is hers, and many other moe; so it befell many yeares agoe, there fell upon her a malady, and when shee had

[1] *Holpe.*—Helped. [2] *Journey.*—A day of battle.

layen a great while she fell to a mesell,[1] and of no leach[2] she could have no remedy, but at the last an old man said, 'And she might have a dish full of the blood of a maide and a cleane virgin in will and in worke, and a kings daughter, that blood would be her health, and for to anoynt her therwith.' And for this thing was this custome made." "Now," said sir Percivales sister, "faire knights, I see well that this gentlewoman is but dead, but if she have so much of my blood." "Certainely," said sir Galahad, "and if yee bleede so much, yee may die." "Truely," said shee, "and I die for to heale her, then shall I get mee great worship and soule health, and worship unto my linage; and better is one harme than twaine; and therefore there shall bee no more battaile, but to morrow I shall yeeld you the custome of the castle." And then there was great joy, more then ever there was afore; for else had there beene mortall warre on the morrow, notwithstanding shee would none other, whether they would or not. All that night were the three fellowes eased with the best, and on the morrow they heard masse; and sir Percivales sister bad bring forth the sick lady; so she was brought fourth before her, which was full evill at ease. Then said shee, "Who shall let me blood?" So anon there came one forth to let her blood, and shee bled so much that the dish was full. Then shee lift up her hand and blessed her; and then shee said unto the lady, "Madame, I am come to my death to make you whole, for Gods love pray for me." With that shee fell in a sowne. Then sir Galahad, sir Percivale, and sir Bors start up to her and lift her up, and stenched her blood; but shee had bled so much that she might not live. Then, when shee was awake, shee said, "Faire brother sir Percivale, I must die for the healing of this lady, so I require you that ye bury not me in this countrie, but as soone as I am dead put me in a boate at the next haven, and let mee goe as adventure will leade mee; and as soone as

[1] *Mesell.*—A leper. [2] *Leach.*—A physician.

yee three come to the citie of Sarras,[1] there to achieve the holy grale, yee shall find me under a toure arived, and there bury me in the spirituall place, for I say you so much, there shal sir Galahad be buried, and ye also in the same place." So when sir Percivale understood these words, he graunted it her weeping. And then said a voice, "Lords and fellowes, to morrow at prime ye three shall depart from other till the adventure bring you unto the maimed king." Then asked shee her Saviour, and as soone as shee had received him, the soule departed from the body. So the same day was the lady healed when shee was enoynted withall. Then sir Percivale made a letter of all that she had holpen them as in strange adventures, and put it in her right hand, and so laid her in a barge, and covered it with silke; and so the wind arose, and drove the barge from the land, and all knights beheld it till it was out of their sight. Then they drew all unto the castle. And so forthwith there fell a sudaine tempest of thunder, lightning, and raine, as all the earth would have broken; soe halfe the castle turned upsid-dowe. So it passed even-song or the tempest was seaced. Then they saw before them a knight armed and wounded hard in the body and in the head, that said, "Oh Lord God, succour me, for now it is neede." After this knight came another knight and a dwarfe, which cried to him afarre, "Stand, yee may not escape." Then the wounded knight held up his hands unto God that he should not die in such tribulation. "Truly," said sir Galahad, "I shall succour him for his sake that he calleth upon." "Sir," said sir Bors, "I shall doe it, for it is not for you, for hee is but one knight." "Sir," said hee, "I graunt." So sir Bors tooke his horse, and commended him to God, and rode after to rescew the wounded knight.

[1] *Sarras.*—See before, p. 66 of the present volume.

CHAP. XCIII.—How sir Galahad and sir Percivale found in a castle many tombs of maidens that had bled to death.

THE story saith, that all night sir Galahad and sir Percivale were in a chappell in their prayers for to save sir Bors. So on the morrow they dressed them in their harneis toward the castle, for to wit what was betide of them therein. And when they came there, they found neither man nor woman but that they were dead by the vengeance of the Lord. With that they heard a voice, which said, "This vengeance is for blood sheding of maidens." Also they found at the end of the chappell a church-yard, and therein might they see fortie[1] faire tombs; and that place was so faire and so delectable, that it seemed them there had beene no tempest, for there lay the bodies of all the dead maidens which were martyred for the sicke ladies sake; also they found the name of everyeach of them, and of what blood they were come, and were all of kings blood, and twelve of them were kings daughters. Then they departed, and went into a forrest. "Now," said sir Percivale unto sir Galahad, "wee must depart, so pray we our Lord that we may meete together in short time." Then took they off their helmes, and kissed together, and wept at their departing.

CHAP. XCIV.—How sir Lancelot entred into the ship where sir Percivales sister lay dead, and how he met with sir Galahad his sonne.

THE story saith, that when sir Launcelot was come to the water of Morteise, as it is rehearsed before, hee was in great perill, and so he laid him downe and slept, and tooke his adventure that God would send him; so when he was a sleepe, there came a vision unto him, and said, "Launcelot, arise up and take thine armour, and enter into the first ship that

[1] *Fortie.—A thre score,* Caxton.

thou shalt find." And when he had heard these words, he start up, and saw a great clearnesse about him; and then hee lift up his hand and blessed him, and so tooke his armour, and made him ready. And by adventure hee came by a strand, and found a ship the which was without saile or ores; and as soone as hee was within the ship, there hee felt the most sweetest savour that ever he felt, and hee was fulfilled with all things that hee thought on or desired. Then hee said, "Faire Father, Jesu Christ, I wote not in what joy I am, for this joy passeth all earthly joyes that ever I was in." And so in this joy he laid him downe on the ship-boord, and slept till day light. And when hee awoke, he found there a faire bed, and therein lying a gentlewoman dead, the which was sir Percivals sister. And as sir Launcelot beheld her, he espied in her right hand a writing, the which hee red, wherein he found all the adventures as ye have heard before, and of what linage shee was come. So with this gentlewoman sir Launcelot was a moneth and more. If yee would aske me how he lived, hee that fed the people of Israell with manna in the desert, in likewise fed him, for every day when hee had said his prayers, hee was susteined with the grace of the Holy Ghost.

So upon a night hee went to play him by the waters side, for hee was somwhat weary of the ship, and then hee listned, and heard an horse come, and one riding upon him; and when hee came nigh hee seemed a knight, and so hee let him passe, and went there as the ship was. And there hee alighted, and tooke the saddell and the bridell, and put the horse from him, and went into the ship. And then sir Launcelot went toward him, and said, "Sir, yee bee welcome." And hee answered, and saluted him againe, and asked him his name, "For much my heart giveth unto you." "Truely," said hee, "my name is sir Launcelot du Lake." "Sir," said he, "then be yee welcome, for yee were the beginner of mee in this world." "Ah," said sir Launce-

lot, "are yee sir Galahad?" "Yee, forsooth," said hee. And so hee kneeled downe, and asked him his blessing, and after tooke off his helme and kissed him; and so there was great joy betweene them, for there is no tongue can tell the joy that they made either of other, and many a friendly word was spoken between them, as kind would, the which is no neede here to be rehearsed. And there everyeach told other of their adventures and mervailes that were befallen them in many journeys, sith they departed from the court. And anon as sir Galahad saw the gentlewoman dead in the bed, hee knew her well enough, and told great worship of her, and that she was the best maide living; and it was great pittie of her death. But when sir Lancelot heard how the mervailous sword was gotten, and who made it, and all the mervailes rehearsed before, then he praied sir Galahad his sonne that he would shew him the sword; and so he did, and anon he kissed the pummell, the hilts, and the scawberd. "Truely," said sir Launcelot, "never till now knew I of so high adventures done, and so mervailous and strange." So dwelled sir Launcelot and sir Galahad within that ship halfe a yeare, and served God daily and nightly with all their power; and oft they arrived in iles farre from folke, where as were but wild beasts; and there they found many strange adventures and perilous, which they brought to an end. But because those adventures were with wild beasts, and not in the quest of the sanegreall, therfore the tale maketh here no mention, for it would be too long to tell of all the adventures that befell them.

CHAP. XCV.—How a knight brought unto sir Galahad an horse, and bad him come from his father sir Launcelot.

SO after, upon a Munday, it befell that they arrived in the edge of a forrest before a crosse of stone; and then saw they a knight armed all in white, and was richly horsed, and led in

his right hand a white horse; and so hee came to the ship, and saluted the two knights upon the high Lords behalfe, and said, "Sir Galahad, yee have beene long enough with your father, come out of the ship and lepe upon this horse, and ride where the adventures shall leade thee in the quest of the sancgreall." Then hee went unto his father, and kissed him full curteously, and said unto him, "Faire father, I wot not when I shall see you any more, till that I see the body of our Lord Jesu Christ." "I pray you," said sir Launcelot, "pray you unto the high Father that hee hold mee in his service." And so hee tooke his horse. And there they heard a voyce that said, "Thinke for to doe well, for the one shall never see the other before the dreadfull day of doome." "Now, my sonne sir Galahad," said sir Launcelot, "sith wee shall depart, and never see other more, I pray unto the high Father of heaven for to preserve both you and me." "Sir," said sir Galahad, "no praier availeth so much as yours." And therewith sir Galahad entred into the forrest; and the winde arose, and drove sir Launcelot more then a moneth throughout the sea, where he slept but little, and prayed unto God that hee might have a sight of the holy sancgreall. So it befell upon a night at midnight hee arived afore a castle on the backe side, which was rich and faire, and there was a posterne that opened toward the sea, and was open without any keeping, save two lions kept the entrie, and the moone shined cleare. Anon sir Launcelot heard a voice that said, "Launcelot, goe out of this ship, and enter into the castle, where thou shalt see a great part of thy desire." Then he ranne to his armes, and armed him, and so hee went unto the gate and saw the two lions; then hee set hands to his sword and drew it; then came there sudainly a dwarfe, that smote him upon the arme so sore that the sword fell out of his hand. Then hee heard a voice that said, "Oh man of evill faith and poore beliefe, wherefore beleevest thou more in thy harneis then in thy maker? for hee might

more availe thee then thine armour, in whose service thou art set." Then said sir Launcelot, "Faire Father, Jesu Christ, I thank thee of thy great mercy that thou reprovest mee of my misdeede; now see I well that thou holdest mee for thy servant." Then tooke hee againe his sword, and put it upon his shield, and made a crosse on his forehead, and came to the lions, and they made semblant to doe him harme, notwithstanding he passed by them without hurt, and entred into the castle to the chiefe foretresse, and there were they all at rest. Then sir Launcelot entred in so armed, and he found no gate nor doore but it was opened. And so at the last hee found a chamber whereof the doore was shut, and hee set his hand therto for to have opened it, but hee might not.

CHAP. XCVI.—How sir Launcelot was before the doore of the chamber wherein the holy sancgreall was.

THEN he enforced him much for to undoe the doore. Then he listned, and heard a voice which sung so sweetly, that it seemed none earthly thing, and him thought that the voice said, "Joy and honour be to the Father of heaven." Then sir Lancelot kneeled downe before the chamber, for well hee wist that there was the sancgreall in that chamber. Then said he, "Faire sweete Father, Jesu Christ, if ever I did thing that pleased the Lord, for thy pittie ne have me not in despite for my foule sins done here before time, and that thou shew me some thing of that which I seek." And with that he saw the chamber doore open, and there came out a great clearenesse, that the house was as bright as though all the torches of the world had beene there. So came hee to the chamber doore, and would have entred, and anon a voice said unto him, "Flee, sir Launcelot, and enter not, for thou oughtest not to doe it, and if thou enter thou shalt forethinke it." And hee withdrew

him backe, and was right heavie in his mind. Then looked hee up in the midest of the chamber, and saw a table of silver, and the holy vessell covered with red samite, and many angels about it, whereof one of them held a candell of waxe burning, and the other held a crosse and the ornaments of the alter. And before the holy vessell hee saw a good man clothed like a priest, and it seemed that hee was at the sakering[1] of the masse; and it seemed unto sir Launcelot that above the prists hands there were three men, whereof the two put the youngest by likenesse betweene the priests hands, and so hee lift it up on high, and it seemed to shew so to the people. And then sir Launcelot mervailed not a little, for him thought that the priest was so greatly charged of the figure, that him seemed that he should have fallen to the ground; and when hee saw none about him that would helpe him, then hee came to the doore a great pace, and said, "Faire Father, Jesu Christ, nor take it for no sinne though I helpe the good man, which hath great need of helpe." Right so hee entred into the chamber, and came toward the table of silver; and when hee came nigh he felt a breath, that him thought was entermedled[2] with fire, which smote him so sore in the visage, that him thought it all to-brent his visage, and therewith hee fell to the ground, and had no power to arise; as hee was so enraged that he had lost the power of his body, and his hearing, and his saying. Then felt hee many hands about him, which tooke him up, and beare him out of the chamber without any amending of his sowne, and left him there seeming dead to all the people. So on the morrow, when it was faire day-light, they within were arisen, and found sir Launcelot lying before the chamber dore, all they mervailed how hee came in. And so they looked upon him, and felt his pulse, to wit whether there were any life in him; and so they found life in him, but hee might neither stand nor stur no member that he had. And so they tooke him by

[1] *Sakering.*—Consecrating. [2] *Entermedled.*—Intermixed.

every part of the body, and beare him into a chamber, and laid him in a rich bed farre from all folke, and so he lay foure dayes. Then the one said he was alive, and the other said nay. "In the name of God," said an old man, "for I doe you verely to wit he is not dead, but he is so full of life as the mightiest of you all, and therfore I counsaile you that hee bee well kept till God send him life againe."

CHAP. XCVII.—How sir Launcelot had layen twentie foure dayes and as many nights as a dead man, and of other matters.

IN such a manner they kept sir Launcelot twentie foure dayes and as many nights, which lay still like as a dead man, and at the twentie five day befell him after midday that he opened his eyes, and when he saw folke, he made great sorrow and said, "Why have yee wakned me? for I was better at ease then I am now. Oh, Jesu Christ, who might be so blessed that might see openly the great mervailes of secretnesse there where no sinner may bee." "What have ye seene?" said they about him. "I have seene," said he, "so great mervailes that no tongue can tell, and more then any heart can thinke, and if my sonne had not beene here before mee I had seene much more." Then they told him how hee had laine there twentie foure dayes and as many nights. Then him thought how it was a punishment for the twentie foure yeares that he had beene a sinner, wherefore our Lord put him in penance twentie foure dayes and nights. Then looked sir Launcelot before him, and saw the haire which hee had borne nigh a yeare, for that hee forethought him right much that hee had broken his promise unto the hermite, which hee had vowed to doe. Then they asked him how it stood with him. "Forsooth," said hee, "I am whole of my body, thanked bee our Lord, therefore, sirs, for Gods love tell me where I am." Then said they all hee was in the castle of Carboneck. Therewith came a gentle-

woman, and brought him a shirt of fine linnen cloth, but hee chaunged not there, but tooke the haire to him againe. "Sir," said they, "the quest of the sanegreall is achieved right now in you, that never shall ye see more of the sanegreall then ye have seene." "Now I thanke God," said sir Launcelot, "of his great mercy of that I have seene, for it suffiseth me; for as I suppose no man in this world hath lived better then I have done, to achieve that I have done." And therewith hee tooke the haire and clothed him in it, and above that he put a linnen shert, and after a robe of scarlet fresh and new. And when hee was so arrayed, they mervailed all, for they knew that hee was sir Launcelot the good knight; and then they said all, "O my lord sir Launcelot, bee that yee?" And then hee said, "Truely, I am he." Then came word to king Pelles that the knight which had layen so long dead was sir Launcelot. Then was king Pelles wonderous glad, and went to see him. And when sir Launcelot saw him come, he dressed him against him; and there the king made great joy of him, and there the king told him tidings that his faire daughter was dead. Then was sir Launcelot right heavy of it, and said, "Sir, it forethinketh me the death of your daughter, for shee was a full faire lady, fresh and young; and well I wot shee beare the best knight that is now on the earth, or that ever was since God was borne." So king Pelles held sir Launcelot there foure dayes, and on the morrow hee tooke his leave of king Pelles and of all the felowship that were there, and thanked them of their great labour. Right so as they sate at their dinner in the chiefe hall, then it was so that the sanegreall had fulfilled the table with all manner of meates that any heart might thinke. So as they sate, they saw all the doores and windowes of the place were shut without mans hand, whereof they were all abashed, and none wist what to doe. And then it hapned sodainely that a knight came unto the chiefe doore, and knocked mightily, and cried, "Undoe the doore;" but they would not, and ever he cried undoe, but

they would not. And at the last it anoyed him so much, that the king himselfe arose, and came to a window where the knight called. Then he said, "Sir knight, yee shall not enter at this time while the sancgreall is here, and therfore go into another; for certainly ye be none of the knights of the quest, but one of them that hath served the feend, and hast left the service of our Lord." Then was he wonderous wroth at the kings words. "Sir knight," said the king, "sith yee would so faine enter, say me of what countrey yee bee." "Sir," said he, "I am of the countrey and realme of Logris, and my name is sir Ector de Maris, and brother unto the noble knight sir Launcelot." "In the name of God," said king Pelles, "me forethinketh that I have said, for your brother is here within." And when sir Ector de Maris understood that his brother was there, for hee was the man in the world that he most dread and loved, and then hee said, "Ah! Lord God, now doubleth my sorrow and shame; full truely said the good man of the hill unto sir Gawaine and me of our dreames." Then went hee out of the court as fast as his courser might runne, and so throughout the castle.

CHAP. XCVIII.—How sir Launcelot returned toward Logris, and of other adventures that he saw in the way.

AND then king Pelles came to sir Launcelot, and told him tidings of his brother, whereof he was sory, that hee wist not what to doe. So sir Launcelot departed, and tooke his armour, and said that hee would goe see the realme of Logris, "which I have not seene these twelve moneths." And therewith hee commended the king unto God, and so rode through many realmes, and at the laste he came unto an abbey, and there hee had great cheare. And on the morow he arose and heard masse, and afore an alter hee found a rich tombe, which was newly made, and then hee tooke heed

and saw the sides written with letters of gold, which said, "Here lyeth king Bagdemagus of Gore, the which king Arthurs nephew slew," and named him, sir Gawaine. Then was he not a little sory, for sir Launcelot loved him more then any other, and if it had beene any other then sir Gawaine hee should not have escaped from death, and said to himself, "Ah! Lord God, this is a full great dammage to king Arthurs court the losse of such a man." And then hee departed, and came unto the abbey where as sir Galahad did the adventure of the tombs and wanne the white shield with the red crosse, and there had hee great cheere all that night. And on the morrow he turned to Camelot, where as hee found king Arthur and queene Guenever; but many of the knights of the round table were slaine and destroyed, more then halfe. And so three of them were come home againe, that were sir Gawaine, sir Ector, and sir Lionell, and many other, which needeth not to be rehearsed. Then all the court was passing glad of sir Launcelot, and king Arthur asked him what tidings of his sonne sir Galahad. And there sir Launcelot told the king of his adventures that had be fallen him sithence hee departed; and also he told him of the adventures of sir Galahad, sir Percivale, and sir Bors, which he knew by the letter of the dead damosell, and as sir Galahad had told him. "Now would God," said the king, "that they were all three here." "That shall never bee," said sir Launcelot, "for two of them shall yee never see, but one of them shall come againe."

CHAP. XCIX.—How sir Galahad came unto king Mordrains, and of other matters and adventures.

NOW the story saith that sir Galahad rode many journeys in vayne; and at the last he came unto the abbey where king Mordraines was, and when he heard that, he thought he would abide to se

him. And on the morrow, when hee had heard masse, sir Galahad came unto king Mordraines, and anon the king saw him, which had lyen blind a long time. And then hee dressed him against him, and said, "Sir Galahad, the servant of Jesu Christ, whose comming I have abidden long, now embrace me and let me rest on thy breast, so that I may rest betweene thine armes, for thou art a cleane virgine above all knights, as the floure of the lilly, in whose virginitie is signified, and thou art the rose, the which is the floure of all good vertues, and in the colour of fire; for the fire of the Holy Ghost is so taken in thee that my flesh, which was of dead oldnesse, is become young againe." When sir Galahad heard his words, he embraced him in his armes.[1] Then said king Mordrains, "Faire Lord Jesu Christ, now I have my will, now I require thee in this point that I am in that thou come and visite me." And anon our Lord heard his praier; therwith the soule departed from the body. And then sir Galahad put him in the earth as a king ought to be; and so departed and came into a perillous forrest, where as hee found the well that boiled with great waves, as the tale telleth before. And so soone as sir Galahad set his hand thereto, it seased, so that it burnt no more, and the heate departed. For that it burnt it was a signe of lechery, the which was that time much used; but that heate might not abide his pure virginite. And this was taken in the countrie for a miracle, and so ever after was it called sir Galahads well. Then by adventure he came into the countrey of Gore, and into the abbey where sir Launcelot had beene before hand, and found the tombe of king Bagdemagus. But Joseph of Arimathies sonne was founder thereof. And there he found the tombe of Simeon, where sir Launcelot had failed. Then hee looked into a crofte under the minister, and there he saw a tombe the which burnt full mervailously. Then asked hee the brethren what it was. "Sir," said they, "it is a mervailous

[1] *Embraced . . . armes.—Enbraced hym and all his body,* Caxton.

adventure that may not bee brought to an end, but by him that passeth of bountie and of knighthood al the knights of the round table." "I would," said sir Galahad, "that ye would lead me therto." "Gladly," said they. And so they led him into a cave; and hee went downe upon a paier of stayers and came nigh the tombe; and then the flaming failed, and the fire staunched, the which many a day had beene great. Then came there a voice that said, "Much are yee beholden to thanke our Lord that hath given you a good houre, that ye may draw the soules out of earthly paine and put them into the joyes of Paradise. I am of your kindred, the which hath dwelled in this heat these three hundred and foure and fifty yeares, for to bee purged of the sinne that I did to Joseph of Arimathy." Then sir Galahad tooke the body in his armes, and beare it to the minster, and that night lay sir Galahad in the abbey; and on the morrow hee gave him service, and put him in the earth, before the hight aulter.

CHAP. C.—How sir Percivale and sir Bors met with sir Galahad, and how they came to the castle of Corbonek, and of other matters.

SO departed hee from thence, and commended the brethren to God. And so he rode five dayes, till that hee came to the maymed king; and ever followed sir Percivale the five dayes asking where hee had beene, and so one told him how the adventures of Logris were achived. So upon a day it befell that they came out of a great forrest, and there they met at a travers[1] with sir Bors that rode alone. It is no need to tel if they minded.[2] And then hee saluted them, and they yeelded him honour and good adventure, and they told each other their adventures. Then said sir Bors, "It is more then a yeare and a halfe that I never lay ten times where men dwelled, but in wild forrests and in mountaines,

[1] *At a travers.*—I suppose a cross-road in the forrest.
[2] *Minded.—If they were glad,* Caxton.

but God was ever my comfort." Then rode they a great while, till they came to the castle of Corbonek; and when they were entred within the castle, king Pelles knew them all. Then was there made great joy, for hee knew well by their comming that they had fulfilled the quest of the sancgreall. Then Eliazar, king Pelles sonne, brought before them the broken sword, wherewith Joseph was smitten through the thigh. Then sir Bors set his hand thereto, if hee might have sodred it againe together, but it would not bee; then he tooke it to sir Percivale, but hee had no more power therto then hee. "Now have yee it," said sir Percivale unto sir Galahad, "for and it bee ever achived by one bodly man, yee must doe it." And then tooke he the peaces and set them together, and they seemed that they had never beene broken, and as well as it had beene first forged. And then they within espied that the adventure of the sword was achived; then they gave the sword unto sir Bors, for it might not bee better set, for hee was a full good knight and a worthy man. And a little before even the sword arose great and mervailous, and was full of great heat, that many men fell for dread. And anon light a voice among them that said, "They that ought not to sit at the table of our Lord Jesu Christ arise, for now shall very knights be fed." So they went thence all, save king Pelles and Eliazar his sonne, the which were holy men, and a maide which was his neece; and so these three fellowes and they three were there, and no moe. Anon they saw knights all armed come in at the hall doore, and did of their helmes and their harneis, and said unto sir Galahad, "Sir, we have hied sore to be with you at this table, where the holy meate shall bee parted." Then said hee, "Yee bee welcome, but of whence be yee?" So three of them said they were of Gaule, and other three said they were of Ireland, and other three said they were of Denmarke. So as they sate thus, there came a bed of tree[1] out of a cham-

[1] *Of tree.*—i. e. of timber, or wood.

ber, the which foure gentlewomen brought, and in that bed lay a good man sicke, and a crowne of gold upon his head, and there in the mids of the place they set them downe and went their way againe. Then hee lift up his head, and said, "Sir Galahad, knight, yee be welcome, for much have I desired your comming, for in such paine and anguish as yee see have I beene long; but now I trust to God the time is come that my paine shall be alayed, that I shall passe out of this world, so as it was promised me long agoe." Therewith a voice said, "There bee two among you that bee not in the quest of the sancgreall, and therefore depart yee."

CHAP. CI.—How sir Galahad and his fellowes were fed with the sancgreall, and how our Lord appeared to them, and of other matters.

THEN king Pelles and his sonne departed; and therewith it seemed them that there came a man and foure angels from heaven, clothed in the likenesse of a bishop, and had a crosse in his hand, and the foure angels beare him up in a chaire, and set him downe before the table of silver, whereupon the sancgreall was, and it seemed that he had in the midest of his forehead letters that said, "See yee here Joseph the first bishop of Christendome, the same which our Lord succoured in the citie of Sarras in the spirituall place." Then the knights mervailed, for that bishop was dead more then three hundred yeares before. "Oh, knights," said hee, "mervaile not, for I was some time an earthly man!" With that they heard the chamber doore open, and there they saw angels, and two beare candles of waxe, and the third a towell, and the fourth a speare which bled mervailously, that the drops fell within a boxe, the which he held with his other hand. And then they set their candles upon the table, and the third put the towell upon the vessell, and the fourth set the holy speare even upright upon

the vessel. And then the bishop made semblance as though he would have gone to the sakring of the masse; and then hee tooke a wapher[1] which was made in the likenesse of bread, and at the lifting up there came a figure in the likenesse of a child, and the visage was as red and as bright as any fire, and smote himselfe into that bread, so that they all saw that the bread was formed of a fleshly man. And then he put it into the holy vessell againe, and then hee did that belonged unto a priest to doe at masse; and then hee went unto sir Galahad and kissed him, and then bad him goe and kisse his fellowes; and as he was bidden, so hee did. "Now," said he, "ye servants of Jesu Christ, ye shall be fed before this table with sweete meates which never no knights tasted." And when he had said, he vanished away, and they set them at the table in great dread, and made their prayers. Then looked they and saw a man come out of the holy vessell, that had all the signes of the passion of Jesu Christ bleding all openly, and said, "My knights and my servants and my true children, which be come out of deadly life into spirituall life, I will now no longer hide mee from you, but yee shall see now a part of my secrets and of my hid things. Now hold and receive the hye meat which yee have so much desired." Then tooke hee himselfe the holy vessell and came to sir Galahad, and hee kneeled downe, and there hee received his Saviour, and so after him received all his felowes, and they thought it so sweet that it was mervaile to tell. Then hee said, "Galahad, sonne, wotest thou what I hold between my hands?" "Nay," said sir Galahad, "but if yee tell mee." "This is," said hee, "the holy dish wherein I eate the lambe on Sher-Thursday,[2] and now hast thou seene that thou desirest most to see, but yet hast thou not seene it so openly as thou shalt see it in the citie of Sarras in the spirituall place. Therfore thou most goe hence, and beare

[1] *A wapher.—A ubblye*, Caxton.

[2] *Sher-Thursday.*—The Thursday before Easter, called also Maunday-Thursday, by which name it is better known.

with the this holy vessell, for this night it shall depart from the realme of Logris, that it shall never bee seene more heere; and wotest thou wherefore? for it is not served nor worshipped to his right by them of this land, for they be turned unto evill living, therefore I shall disherite them. And therfore goe yee three to morrow unto the sea, where as yee shall find your ship ready. And with you take the sword with the strange girdels, and no more with you but sir Percivale and sir Bors. And also I will ye take with you of the blood of this spere for to anoint the maimed king, both his leges and all his body, and hee shall have his health." "Sir," said sir Galahad, "why shall not these other felowes go with us?" "For this cause, for right as I departed mine apostles, one here and another there, so will I that yee depart. And two of you shall die in my service, but one of you shall come againe and tell tidings." Then gave hee them his blessing, and vanished away.

CHAP. CII.—How sir Galahad anoynted with the blood of the speare the maimed king, and of other adventures.

THEN sir Galahad went anon to the speare which lay upon the table, and touched the blood with his fingers, and came to the maimed king and anoynted his legges. And therewith hee cloathed him anon, and start upon his feete out of his bed as an whole man, and thanked our Lord that he had healed him; and that was not to the world-ward, for anon hee yeelded him unto a place of religion of white munkes, and was a full holy man. That same night about midnight there came a voice among them, that said thus, "Mine owne sonnes and not my chiefe sonnes, my friends and not my warriours, goe yee hence whether ye hope best to doe, and as I bad you." "Ah! thanked be thou, Lord," said they, "that thou wilt vouchsafe to call us so, now may wee prove that wee have not lost our paine." And anon in all

hast they tooke their harneis and departed, but the three knights of Gaule, one of them hight Claudine, king Claudas sonne, and the other two were great gentlemen. Then prayed sir Galahad unto everyeach of them, "If yee goe unto king Arthurs court, that ye will salute my lord sir Lancelot my father, and all the fellowship of the round table; and pray them that if they come in these parts, that they should not forget it." Right so departed sir Galahad, and sir Percivale, and sir Bors with him; and so they rode three dayes, and then they came to a rivage,[1] and found the ship, whereof the tale speaketh before. And when they came within bord, they found in the middest the table of silver which they had left with the maimed king, and the sanegreall, which was covered with red samit. Then were they passing glad for to have such things in their fellowship; and so they entred, and made great reverence thereto, and sir Galahad fell in his prayers long time unto our Lord, that, at what time hee asked, hee might passe out of this world. And so much he prayed, till at the last a voice said to him, "Galahad, thou shalt have thy request, and when thou askest the death of thy body thou shalt have it, and then shalt thou find the life of thy soule." Sir Percivale heard this, and prayed him, of fellowship that was betweene them, for to tell him wherefore he asked such things. "That shall I tell you," said sir Galahad; "the other day when we saw the part of the adventures of the sanegreall, I was in such a joy of heart that I trow never man was that was earthly, and therefore I wot well that when my body is dead my soule shall bee in great joy to see the blessed Trinitie every day and the majestie of our Lord Jesu Christ." So long were they in the ship, that they said unto sir Galahad, "Sir, in this bed ought yee to lye, for so saith the Scripture." And then he laid him downe, and slept a great while, and when hee awaked hee looked afore him and saw the citie of Sarras. And as they would have

[1] *A rivage.*—A shore, or strand.

landed, they saw the ship wherein sir Percivale had put his sister. "Truely," said sir Percivale, "in the name of God, wel hath my sister held us covenant." Then tooke they out of the ship the table of silver. And hee tooke it to sir Percivale and to sir Bors to goe before, and sir Galahad came behind; right so they went into the citie. And at the gate of the citie they saw an old man sit crooked. Then sir Galahad called him and bad him helpe to beare this heavie thing. "Truely," said the old man, "it is ten yeare agoe that I might not goe but with crutches." "Care thou not," said sir Galahad, "arise up, and shew thy good will." And so he assayed, and found himselfe as whole as ever hee was; then hee ranne to the table, and tooke one part against sir Galahad. And anon there arose a great noyse in the citie, that a cripple was made whole by knights mervailous that were entred into the citie. Then anon after the three knights went to the water, and brought up into the pallace sir Percivales sister, and buried her as richly as a kings daughter ought to bee. And when the king of the citie, which was called Estourause, saw the fellowship, he asked them of whence they were, and what thing it was that they had brought upon the table of silver. And they told him the truth of the sancgreall, and the power that God had set there. Then the king was a tyrant, and was come of the linage of paynims, and tooke them and put them in prison in a deepe hole.

CHAP. CIII.—How they were fed with the sancgreall while they were in prison, and how sir Galahad was made king.

UT as soone as they were there, our Lord sent them the sancgreall, through whose grace they were alway fulfiled while they were in prison. So at the yeares end it befell that this king Estourause lay sicke and felt that hee should die; then he sent for the three knights, and they came before him, and

he cried them mercie of that he had done to them, and they forgave him goodly, and he died anon. When the king was dead, all the citie was dismaid, and wist not who might bee their king. Right so as they were in counsaile together, there came a voice among them and bad them chose the youngest knight of them three to be their king, "for he shall maintaine you and all yours." So they made sir Galahad king by all the assent of the holy city, and else they would have slaine him. And when he was come for to behold the land, he let make about the table of silver a chest of gold and of precious stones that covered the holy vessell, and every day in the morning the three fellowes would come before it and said their devotions. Now at the yeres end, and the same day after that sir Galahad had borne the crowne of gold, he arose up early and his fellowes, and came unto the palace, and saw before them the holy vessel, and a man kneeling upon his knees in the likenesse of a bishop, which had about him a great fellowship of angels as it had beene Jesu Christ himselfe. And then he arose, and began a masse of our Lady; and when hee came to the sakring of the masse, and had done, anon he called sir Galahad, and said unto him, "Come forth, the servant of Jesu Christ, and thou shalt see that which thou hast much desired to se." And then sir Galahad began to tremble right sore when the deadly flesh began to behold the spirituall things. Then he held up both his hands toward heaven, and said, "Lord, I thanke thee, for now I see that which hath beene my desire many a day. Now blessed Lord, would I no longer live, if it might please thee good Lord." And there with the good man tooke our Lords body betweene his hands, and proffred it unto sir Galahad, and he received it right gladly and meekly. "Now," said the good man, "wotest thou whom I am?" "Nay," said sir Galahad. "I am Joseph of Arimathie, which our Lord hath sent heere to thee to beare the fellowship. And wotest thou wherfore he hath sent me more then any

other? for thou hast resembled me in two things; one is that thou hast seene the sancgreall, and the other is in that thou hast beene a cleane maiden as I am." And when he had said these words, sir Galahad went to sir Percivale and kissed him, and commended him to God; and so he went to sir Bors, and kissed him, and commended him to God, and said, "Faire lord, salute me to my lord sir Launcelot my father, and, as soone as yee see him, bid him remember this unstable world." And therwith hee kneeled downe before the table, and made his praiers; and then sodainly his soule departed unto Jesu Christ, and a great multitude of angels beare his soule up to heaven, that his two fellowes might behold it. Also his two fellowes saw come from heaven an hand, but they saw not the body, and then it came right to the vessell, and tooke it and the speare, and so beare it up to heaven. Sithence was there never no man so hardy for to say that hee had seene the sancgreall.

CHAP. CIV.—Of the sorrow that sir Percivale and sir Bors made when sir Galahad was dead, and of the death of sir Percivale, and of other matters.

WHEN sir Percivale and sir Bors saw sir Galahad dead, they made as much sorrow as ever did two men, and, if they had not beene good men, they might lightly have falen in despaire. And the people of the countrey and of the citie were right heavy. And as soone as hee was buried, sir Percivale yeelded him to an hermitage out of the citie, and tooke a religious clothing, and sir Bors was alway with him, but he never changed his secular clothing, because he purposed him to go againe into the realme of Logris. Thus a yeare and two moneths lived sir Percivale in the hermitage a full holy life, and then passed out of this world; and sir Bors let bury him by his sister and by sir Galahad in the spi-

ritualities. When sir Bors saw that hee was in so farre countréys, as in the parts of Babilon, he departed from Sarras, and armed him, and came to the sea and entred into a ship; and so it befell him by good adventure to come into the realme of Logris, and then hee rode fast till hee came to Camelot, where king Arthur was. And then was there made great joy of him in the court, for they deemed all that hee had beene dead, for as much as he had beene so long out of the countrey. And when they had eaten, king Arthur made great clarkes to come before him, that they should cronicle the high adventures of the good knights. When sir Bors had told him of the adventures of the sancgreal, such has had befallen him and his two fellowes, that was sir Galahad and sir Percivale, then sir Launcelot told the adventures of the sancgreall that hee had seene. All this was made in great bookes, and put in almeries at Salisbury.[1] And anon sir Bors said unto sir Launcelot, "Sir Galahad your sonne saluted you by me, and after you king Arthur and all the court, and so did sir Percivale, for I buried them with mine owne hands in the citie of Sarras. Also, sir Launcelot, sir Galahad praieth you for to remember this unsteadfast world, as yee behight him when yee were together more then halfe a yeare." "This is full true," said sir Launcelot, "now I trust to God his praier shall availe me." Then sir Launcelot tooke sir Bors in his armes, and said, "Gentle cosin, ye are welcome to me, and all that ever I may doe for you and for yours yee shall find mee ready at all times while I have life, and that I promise you faithfully, and never to faile you; and wit yee well, gentle cosin sir Bors, that you and I will never depart in sunder whiles that our lives may last." "Sir," said hee, "I will as yee will."[2]

[1] *Almeries at Salisbury.*—In the cupboards of the library of Salisbury cathedral. The library of Salisbury cathedral seems to have been celebrated during the Middle Ages.

[2] *As ye will.*—Caxton ends this chapter with the colophon, *Thus*

CHAP. CV.—Of the joy that king Arthur and queene Guenever had of the achivement of the sancgreall, and how sir Launcelot fell to his old love againe.

NOW after that the quest of the sancgreall was fulfilled, and that all the knights that were left alive were come againe to the round table, as the booke of the sancgreal maketh mention, then was there great joy in the court. And especially king Arthur and queene Guenever made great joy of the remnant that were come home; and passing glad was the king and the queene of sir Launcelot and of sir Bors, for they had beene passing long away in the quest of the sancgreall. Then sir Launcelot began to resort unto queene Guenever againe, and forgat the promise and the profession that he made in the quest; had not sir Launcelot beene in his privy thoughts and in his minde set inwardly to the queene, as hee was in seeming outward unto God, there had no knight passed him in the quest of the sancgreall, but ever his thoughts were prively upon the queene. And so they loved together more hotter then ever they had done before, and had such privy draughts together, that many in the court spake of it, and most specially sir Agrawaine, sir Gawaines brother, for he was ever open mouthed. So it beefell that sir Launcelot had many resorts of ladyes and damosels, that daily resorted unto him, which besought him to bee their champion; and in all such matters of right sir Launcelot appealed him daily to doe for the pleasure of our Lord Jesu Christ. And alwayes as much as hee might hee withdrew him from the company and fellowship of queene Guenever, for to eschew the slaunder and the noise; wherefore the queene waxed wroth and angry with sir Laun-

endeth thistory of the sancgreal, that was brevely drawen oute of Frensshe into Englysshe, the whiche is a story cronycled for one of the truest and the holyest that is in thys world. We now return to the history of Launcelot.

celot. And upon a day shee called sir Launcelot unto her chamber, and said to him thus, "Sir Launcelot, I see and feele daily that thy love beginneth to slacke, for thou hast no joy to bee in my presence, but ever thou art out of this court, and quarels and matters thou hast now adayes for ladies and gentlewomen, more then ever thou were wont to have in time past." "Ah! madame," said sir Launcelot, "in this yee must have me excused for divers causes; one is, that I was but late in the quest of the sancgreall, and I thanke God of his great mercy, and never of my deserving, that I saw in my quest as much as ever saw any sinfull man; and so was it told me, and if I had not my privy thoughts to returne to your love againe as I doe, I had seene as great misteries as ever saw my sonne sir Galahad, sir Percivale, or sir Bors, and therfore, madame, I was but late in that quest; wite yee well, madame, it may not bee yet lightly forgotten the hie service in whom I did my diligent labour. Also, madame, wit yee well that there bee many men that speake of our love in this place, and have you and me greatly in awaite, as sir Agravaine and sir Mordred; and wit yee well, madame, I dread them more for your sake then for any feare that I have of them my selfe, for I may happen to escape and rid my selfe in a great need, where as yee must abide all that will bee said to you; and then if that yee fall in any distresse through wilfull folly, then is there none other remedy or help but by mee and my blood. And wit yee well, madame, the boldnesse of you and me will bring us unto great shame and slaunder, and that were me loth to see you dishonoured; and that is the cause that I take upon me more for to doe for damosels and maidens then ever I did before, that men should understand my joy and my delight is to have to doe for damosels and maidens."

CHAP. CVI.—How the queene commanded sir Launcelot to avoid the court, and of the sorrow that sir Launcelot made.

ALL this while the queene stood still, and let sir Launcelot say what hee would; and when hee had all said, shee brake out on weeping, and shee sobbed and wept a great while; and when shee might speake, shee said, "Sir Launcelot, now I understand that thou art a false recreaunt knight and a common letchour, and lovest and holdest other ladies, and of mee thou hast disdaine and scorne. For wit thou well," said shee, "now I understand thy falsehood, and therefore shall I never love thee no more, and never bee thou so hardy to come in my sight, and right heere I charge thee that thou never come more within this court, and I forbid thee my fellowship, and upon paine of thy head that thou see mee no more." Right so sir Launcelot departed with great heavinesse, that unnethe hee might susteine himselfe for great dole making. Then hee called sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Lionell, and told them how the queene had forbidden him the court, and so hee was in will to depart into his owne countrey. "Faire sir," said sir Bors de Ganis, "yee shall not depart out of this land by mine advise; yee must remember in what honour yee are renowmed and called the most noble knight of the world, and many great matters yee have in hand, and women in their hastinesse will do oftentimes which sore repent them, and therfore by mine advise yee shall take your horses and ride to the hermitage beside Windsore, which sometime was a good knight, whose name is sir Brasias, and there shall yee abide till I send you word of better tidings." "Faire cosin,"[1] said sir Launcelot, "wit yee well that I am full loth to depart out of this realme, but the queene hath forbidden me so highly, that me seemeth shee will never bee my good lady as shee hath beene in times past." "Say yee never

[1] *Cosin.*—Here and on the next page the edit. of 1634 has *brother.*

so," said sir Bors, "for many times before time shee hath beene wroth with you, and after it shee was the first that repented it." "Yee say well," said sir Launcelot, "for now will I doe by your counsaile, and take my horse and my harneys, and ride to the heremit sir Brasias, and there will I rest me untill I heere some manner of tidings from you. But, faire cosin, I pray you get me the love of my lady queene Guenever, and yee may." "Sir," said sir Bors, "yee neede not to move mee of such matters, for well yee wot I will doe what I may to please you." And then the noble knight sir Launcelot departed sodainely with a right heavy cheere, that none earthly creature wist of him where he was become, but onely sir Bors. So when sir Launcelot was departed, the queene made no manner of outward sorrow, in shewing to none of his blood, nor yet to none other; but wit yee well that inwardly shee tooke great thought, but shee beare it out with a proud countenance as though shee felt no thought nor daunger.

CHAP. CVII.—How at a dinner the which the queene made there was a knight poisoned, the which sir Mador laide upon the queene.

AND then the queene let make a privy dinner in the citie of London unto the knights of the round table; and all was for to shew outward that shee had as great joy in all other knights of the round table as shee had in sir Launcelot. All only at that dinner she had sir Gawaine and his bretheren, that is to say, sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, sir Gareth, and sir Mordred; also there was sir Bors de Ganis, sir Blamor de Ganis, sir Bleoberis de Ganis, sir Galihud, sir Galihodin, sir Ector de Maris, sir Lionell, sir Palomides, and his brother sir Safire, sir La-cote-male-taile, sir Persaunt, sir Ironside, sir Brandiles, sir Kay the seneshall, sir Mador de la Port, sir Patrice, a knight of Ireland, sir Aliducke, sir Astomore, and sir Pinell le Savage, the which was cosin unto sir Lamoracke de Galis, the good knight, the which

sir Gawaine and his bretheren slew by treason. And so these knights should dine with the queen in a privy place by themselves; and there was made a great feast of all manner of dainty meates and drinkes. But sir Gawaine had a custome that hee used daily at dinner and at supper, that hee loved well all manner fruite, and in especiall apples and peares; and therefore, whosoever dined or feasted, sir Gawaine would comonly purvey for good fruit for him, and so did the queene for to please sir Gawaine, shee let purvey for him of all manner of fruits, for sir Gawaine was a passing hot knight of nature. And this sir Pinell hated sir Gawaine because of his kinsman sir Lamoracke de Galis, and therfore, for pure envy and hate, sir Pinell poysoned certaine apples, for to poyson sir Gawaine withall. And so this was well unto the end of the meat. And so it befell by misfortune that a good knight named sir Patrice, cosin to sir Mador de la Port, tooke one of the poysoned apples; and when he had eaten it, hee swelled til he brast, and there sir Patrice fell downe dead sodainly among them. Then every knight lept from the board ashamed and enraged for wrath nigh out of their wits, for they wist not what to say; considering that queene Guenever made the feast and dinner, they all had suspection upon her. "My lady the queene," said sir Gawaine, "wit yee well, madame, that this dinner was made for me, for all folkes that know my conditions understand well that I love fruit, and now I see well I had near beene slaine; therefore, madame, I dread me least yee will bee shamed." Then the queene stood still, and was right sore abashed that shee wist not what to say. "This shall not bee ended so," said sir Mador de la Port, "for heere have I lost a full noble knight of my blood, and therefore upon this shame and despite I will bee revenged to the uttermost." And thereupon sir Mador appealed queene Guenever of the death of his cosin sir Patrice. Then stood they all still, that none of them would speake a word against him, for they had a great suspection

unto queen Guenever, because she let make the dinner. And the queene was so sore abashed that she could none otherwise doe but wept so heartely that she fell in a sowne. With this noise and sodaine crie came unto them king Arthur, and mervailed greatly what it might bee; and when hee wist of their trouble, and the sodaine death of that good knight sir Patrice, he was a passing heavy man.

CHAP. CVIII.—How sir Mador apeached the queene of treason, and there was no knight would fight for her at the first time.

AND ever sir Mador stood still before king Arthur, and ever hee appealed queene Guenever of treason; for the custome was such at that time that all manner of shamefull death was called treason. "Faire lords," said king Arthur, "mee repenteth sore of this trouble, but the cause is so wee may not have to doe in this matter, for I must be a rightful judge, and that repenteth me that I may not doe battaile for my wife, for, as I deeme, this deede came never of her; and therefore I suppose wee shall not all bee destitute,[1] but that some good knight shall put his body in jeopardie for my queen rather then shee should be brent in a wrong quarrell; and therefore, sir Mador, be not so hastie, for it may happen shee shall not be all friendlesse, and therfore desire thou the day of battell, and shee shall purvey her of some good knight which shall answere you, or else it were to mee great shame, and unto all my court." "My gracious lord," said sir Mador, "yee must hold me excused, for though ye be our king, in that degree ye are but a knight as we are, and ye are sworn unto knighthood as well as wee, and therefore I pray you that yee will not bee displeased; for there is none of the twentie knights that were bidden for to come unto this dinner, but all they have great suspection unto the queene. What say yee all, my lords?" said sir Mador. Then they answered by and by, and said that they could

[1] *Destitute.—Disteyned,* Caxton.

not excuse the queene, for why, shee made the dinner, and either it must come by her or by her servants. "Alas!" said the queene, "I made this dinner for a good entent, and never for none evil, so God helpe me in my right, as I was never purposed to doe such evill deedes, and that I report mee unto God." "My lord the king," said sir Mador, "I require you heartily, as yee be a righteous king, give mee a day that I may have justice." "Well," said king Arthur, "I give you day this day fifteene dayes, that yee be ready armed on horsebacke in the medow beside Westminster; and if it so fall that there bee any knight to encounter with you, there may ye doe your best, and God speede the right; and if it so fall that there be no knight at that day, then must my queene be brent, and there shall shee bee ready to have her judgement." "Well I am answered," said sir Mador. And every knight went where it liked him. So when the king and the queene were together, the king asked the queene how this case befell. Then answered the queene, "So God me helpe, I wot not how nor in what manner." "Where is sir Launcelot?" said king Arthur; "and he were here he would not grutch to doe battaile for you." "Sir," said the queene, "I can not tell you where hee is, but his brother and all his kindsmen deeme that hee is not within this realme." "That sore repenteth me," said king Arthur, "for and hee were here he would ful soone stint this strife. Then I will counsaile you," said the king, "that ye goe unto sir Bors, and pray him to doe that battaile for you for sir Launcelots sake, and upon my life hee will not refuse you; for right well I perceive," said king Arthur, "that none of all those twentie knights without moe that were with you in fellowship together at your dinner, where sir Patrice was so trayterously slaine, that will doe battaile for you, nor none of them will say well of you, and that shall be great slaunder for you in this court." "Alas!" said the queene, "I can not doe withall; but now I misse sir

Launcelot, for and he were here hee would put mee full soone unto my hearts ease." "What aileth you," said king Arthur, "that yee can not keepe sir Launcelot on your side? for wit yee well," said king Arthur, "whosoever hath the noble knight sir Launcelot on his part hath the most man of worship in the world on his side. Now goe your way," said the king unto the queen, "and require sir Bors to do battaile for you for sir Launcelots sake."

CHAP. CIX.—How the queene required sir Bors to fight for her, and how hee granted her upon a condition, and how he warned sir Launcelot thereof.

SO the queene departed from the king, and sent for sir Bors into her chamber; and when hee was come, shee besought him of succour. "Madame," said he, "what would ye that I doe? for I may not with my worship have to doe in this matter, because I was at that same dinner, for dread that any of those knights would have me in suspection; also, madame," said sir Bors, "now misse yee sir Launcelot, for hee would not have failed you, neither in right nor yet in wrong, as yee have well proved when ye have beene in danger, and now have ye driven him out of this countrey, by whom yee and wee all were dayly worshiped. Therefore, madame, I greatly mervaile mee how yee dare for shame require mee to doe any thing for you, in so much as yee have chaced him out of your countrey by whom we were borne up and honoured." "Alas! faire knight," said the queen, "I put mee wholy in your grace, and all that is done amisse I will amend as ye will counsaile me." And therewith she kneeled downe upon both her knees, and besought sir Bors to have mercy upon her, "or I shall have a shamefull death, and thereto I never offended." Right so came king Arthur, and found the queene kneeling before sir Bors. Then sir Bors tooke her up, and said,

"Madame, yee doe to me great dishonour." "Ah, gentle knight," said king Arthur, "have mercy upon my queene, for I am now in a certaine that shee is now untruely defamed; and therefore, curteous knight," said the king, "promise her to doe battaile for her, I require you for the love of sir Launcelot." "My lord," said sir Bors, "yee require mee of the greatest thing that any man may require me, and wit yee well if I graunt to doe battaile for the queene, I shall wrath many of my fellowshippe of the round table; but as for that," said sir Bors, "I will graunt my lord, for my lord sir Launcelots sake, and for your sake, I will at that day be the queenes champion, unlesse that there come by adventure a better knight then I am to do battaile for her." "Will ye promise this," said the king, "by your faith?" "Yee, sir," said sir Bors, "of that will I not faile you nor her both[1]; but if that there come a better knight then I am, then shall hee have the battaile." Then was the king and the queene passing glad, and thanked him heartily, and so departed. So then sir Bors departed secretly upon a day, and rode unto sir Launcelot, there as he was with the hermite sir Brasias, and told him of all his adventures. "Ah, Jesu!" said sir Lancelot, "this is happely come as I would have it, and therefore I pray you make you ready to doe battaile, but looke that ye tary till ye see me come as long as ye may, for I am sure sir Mador is an hot knight, if hee bee chafed, for the more yee suffer him, the hastier will he be to doe battaile." "Sir," said sir Bors, "let mee deale with him, doubt yee not yee shall have all your will." Then departed sir Bors from him, and came unto the court againe. Then was it noysed in all the court that sir Bors should doe battaile for the queene, wherefore many knights were greatly displeased with him, that he should take upon him to doe battaile in the queenes quarrell; for there were but few knights in the court but that they deemed the queene was in the wrong, and that shee

[1] *You nor her both.*—An old English phrase for *neither you nor her.*

had done that treason. So sir Bors answered thus unto his fellowes of the round table: "Wit yee well, my faire lords, it were shame unto us all and wee suffered to see the most noble queene of the world for to bee shamed openly, considering that her lord and our lord is the man of most worship in the world, and the most christned[1]; and hee hath alway worshiped[2] us all in all places." Many knights answered him againe, and said, "As for our most noble king Arthur, wee love him and honour him as well as yee doe, but as for queene Guenever, wee love her not, for because shee is a destroyer of good knights." "Faire lords," said sir Bors, "me seemeth yee say not as yee should say, for never yet in all my daies knew I nor heard say that ever shee was a destroyer of any good knight; but at all times, as far as I ever could know, shee was alwayes a maintainer of good knights, and alway shee hath beene large and free of her goods to all good knights, and the most bounteous lady of her gifts and her good grace that ever I saw or heard speak of; and therfore it were great shame," said sir Bors, "unto us all to our most noble kings wife, if we suffer her to be shamefully slaine. And wit ye well," said sir Bors, "I will not suffer it, for I dare say so much, the queene is not guilty of sir Patrice death, for she ought[3] him never none evil will, nor none of the twentie-foure knights that were at that dinner; for I dare well say that it was for good love shee had us to dinner, and not for no male engin,[4] and that I doubt not shall bee proved heereafter, for howsoever the game goeth, there was treason among some of us." Then some said to sir Bors, "Wee may well beleeve your words." And so some of them were well pleased, and some were not pleased.

[1] *The most christned.*—i. e. who is the great ornament or support of Christendom—apparently equivalent, or nearly so, with the modern appellation of "the most Christian king."

[2] *Worshiped.*—Conferred honour upon.

[3] *Ought.*—Owed.

[4] *Male engin.*—Malice.

CHAP. CX.—How at the day sir Bors made him ready for to fight for queene Guenever, and how another discharged him when hee should fight.

THE day came on fast untill the even[1] that the battaile should bee. Then the queene sent for sir Bors, and asked him how hee was disposed. "Truly, madame," said hee, "I am disposed in likewise as I promised you, that is to say, I shall not faile you, unlesse by adventure there come a better knight then I to do battaile for you, then, madame, am I discharged of my promise." "Will yee," said the queene, "that I tell my lord king Arthur thus?" "Doe as it shall please you, madame," said sir Bors. Then the queene went unto the king, and told him the answere of sir Bors. "Have yee no doubt," said the king, "of sir Bors, for I call him now one of the best knights of the world, and the most profitablest man." And thus it past foorth untill the morrow. And the king and the queene, and all the knights that were there at that time, drew them to the medow beside Winchester,[2] where as the battaile should bee. And so when the king was come, with the queene, and many knights of the round table, then the queen was put there in the constables ward, and there was made a great fire about the iron stake, that, and sir Mador de la Port had the better, she should be brent. Such a custome was used in those dayes, that neither for favour, nor for love, nor for affinitie, there should bee none other but rightwise judgement, as well upon a king as upon a knight, as well upon a queene as upon another poore lady.

So in the meane while came in sir Mador de la Port, and tooke his oath before the king, that queene Guenever did this treason unto his cosin sir Patrice, and unto his oath hee would prove it with his body, hand for hand, who

[1] *Even.*—i. e. the evening before the day; the eve.

[2] *Winchester.*—So also in Caxton; but evidently an error for *Westminster.*

that would say the contrary thereto. Right so came sir Bors de Ganis, and said that, "as for queene Guenever, shee is in the right, and that will I make good with my hands, that she is not culpable of this treason that is put upon her." "Then make thee ready," said sir Mador, "and wee shal soone prove whether thou be in the right or I." "Sir," said sir Bors, "wit ye well I know thee for a good knight, not for then I shall not feare thee so greatly, but I trust unto Almightie God my maker I shall bee able enough to withstand thy malice; but thus much have I promised my lord king Arthur, and my lady the queene, that I shall doe battaile for her in this case to the uttermost, onles that there come a better knight then I am, and discharge me." "Is that all?" said sir Mador; "either come thou off, and doe battaile with mee, or else say nay." "Take your horse," said sir Bors, "and as I suppose yee shall not tary long but that ye shall be answered." Then either departed to their tents, and made them ready to mount upon horsebacke as they thought best. And anon sir Mador de la Port came into the field with his shield on his shoulder, and a speare in his hand; and so rode about the place, crying unto king Arthur, "Bid your champion come forth, and he dare." Then was sir Bors ashamed, and tooke his horse, and came to the list end. And then was hee ware where as came out of a wood, there fast by, a knight all armed at all points upon a white horse, with a strange shield, and of strange armes; and he came riding all that he might runne; and so he came to sir Bors, and said, "Faire knight, I pray you bee not displeased, for here must a better knight then yee are have this battaile; therefore I pray you to withdraw you, for I would yee knew I have had this day a right great journey, and this battaile ought to be mine, and so I promised you when I spake with you last." "And with all my heart I thanke you for your good will." Then sir Bors rode unto king Arthur, and told him how there was a knight come that

would have the battell for to fight for the queene. "What knight is he?" said king Arthur. "I cannot shew you," said sir Bors, "but such a covenant made hee with mee for to bee here this day; now, my lord," said sir Bors, "here am I discharged."

CHAP. CXI.—How sir Launcelot fought against sir Mador de la Port for the queene, and how he overcame sir Mador and discharged the queene.

THEN the king called unto that knight, and asked him if he would fight for the queen. Then he answered unto the king, "Therfore came I hither, and therfore, sir king," he said, "tary me no longer, for I may not tary; for anon as I have finished this battail I must depart hence, for I have to doe many matters else where. For wit yee well," said that knight, "this is dishonour unto you al, knights of the round table, to see and know so noble a lady and so curteous a queene as queene Guenever is, thus to bee rebuked and shamed among you." Then mervailed they all what knight that might bee, that so tooke the battaile upon him, but there was not one that knew him, but if it were sir Bors. Then said sir Mador de la Port unto the king, "Now let me wit with whom I shall have to doe withall." And then they rode to the lists end, and there they couched their speares, and ranne the one against the other with all their mights, and sir Mador's speare brake all to peeces; but sir Launcelots speare held and beare sir Mador's horse and all backward to the ground, and he had a great fall. But mightely and sodainely he avoided his horse, and dressed his shield before him, and then drew his sword, and bad that other knight alight and do battaile with him on foot. Then that knight discended lightly from his horse like a valiant man, and put his shield afore him and drew out his sword. And so they came egerly to battaile, and either gave other many sad strookes, tracing and traversing, racinge and foyning, and hurling together with their swords

as they had been two wild boors. Thus were they fighting nigh an houre, for this sir Mador was a ful strong knight, and mightely proved in many strong battailes; but at the last this knight smot sir Mador groveling upon the ground, and the knight stept neere him for to have pulled sir Mador flatling upon the ground. And therwithal sodeinly sir Mador arose, and in his arising hee smot that knight through the thigh, that the blood ranne out right fiersly; and when hee felt himselfe so wounded and saw his blood, hee let him arise upon his feete, and then hee gave him such a buffet upon the helme that hee fell flatling to the ground, and therewith hee strod to him for to have pulled off his helme from his head. And then sir Mador praied that knight to save his life; and so hee yeelded him as an overcome knight, and released the queene of his quarell. "I will not graunt thee life," said the knight, "but onely that thou freely release the queene for ever, and that no manner of mention bee made upon sir Patrices tombe that ever queene Guenever consented to that treason." "All this shall bee done," said sir Mador, "and clearely I discharge my quarell for ever." Then the knights parters[1] of the lists tooke up sir Mador, and led him to his tent, and the other knight went streight to the steire foote where as king Arthur sate, and by that time was the queene come unto the king, and either kissed other lovingly. And when the king saw that knight, hee stooped downe unto him and thanked him, and in like wise did the queene. And then the king praied him to put off his helme and to rest him, and to take a sop of wine; and then hee put off his helme to drinke, and then every knight knew that hee was the noble knight sir Launcelot. As soone as the king wist that, hee tooke the queene by the hand, and went unto sir Launcelot, and said, "Gramercy of your great travaile that yee have had this day for mee and for my queene." "My

[1] *Knights parters.*—The knights who had the direction of the arrangements of the battle.

lord," said sir Launcelot, "wit yee well that I ought of right ever to be in your quarel, and in my lady the queenes quarell, to doe battaile, for yee are the man that gave mee the high order of knighthood, and that day my lady your queene did mee great worship, or else I had beene shamed. For that same day yee made mee knight, through my hastinesse I lost my sword, and my lady your queene found it, and lapped it in her traine, and gave me my sword when I had neede thereof, or else had I beene shamed among all knights. And therefore, my lord king Arthur, I promised her at that day ever to bee her knight in right or in wrong." "Gramercy," said king Arthur, "for this journey; and wit you well," said king Arthur, "I shall acquite you of your goodnesse." And ever the queene beheld sir Launcelot, and wept so tenderly that shee sanke almost downe upon the ground for sorrow, that hee had done to her so great goodnesse, whereas shee had shewed him great unkindnesse. Then the knights of his blood drew unto him, and there either of them made great joy of other; and so came all the knights of the round table that were there at that time, and he welcomed them. And then sir Mador was had to lechcraft; and sir Launcelot was healed of his wound. And then was there made great joy and mirth in the court.

CHAP. CXII.—How the truth was knowen by the damosell of the lake, and of divers other matters.

AND so it befell that the damosell of the lake, which was called Nimue, the which wedded the good knight sir Pelleas, and so she came to the court, for ever she did great goodnesse unto king Arthur and to all his knights, through her sorcery and enchantments. And so when shee heard how the queene was anangred[1] for the death of sir Patrice, then shee told it openly that shee was never gilty; and there she disclosed by whom it was done, and named him sir Pinell, and for what

[1] *An angred.*—Tormented; attacked so as to make her angry.

cause he did it; there it was openly disclosed, and so the queene was excused, and the knight sir Pinell fled into his countrey. Then was it openly knowen that sir Pinell empoysoned the appels of the feast, to the entent to have destroied sir Gawaine, because sir Gawaine and his brethren destroyed sir Lamoracke de Galis, to whome sir Pinell was cosin unto. Then was sir Patrice buried in the church of Winchester in a tombe, and therupon written: "Here lieth sir Patrice of Ireland, slaine by sir Pinell le Savage, that empoysoned appels to have slaine sir Gawaine, and by misfortune sir Patrice eate one of those appels, and then sodeinly hee brast." Also there was written upon the tombe that queene Guenever was appealed of treason of the death of sir Patrice by sir Mador de la Port, and there was made mention how sir Launcelot fought with him for queene Guenever, and overcame him in plaine battaile. And this was written upon the tombe of sir Patrice in excusing of the queen. And then sir Mador sewed daily and long to have the queenes good grace; and so by the meanes of sir Launcelot hee caused him to stand in the queenes grace, and all was forgiven. Thus it passed forth until our Lady day the Assumption; within fifteen dayes of that feast king Arthur let cry a great justs and turneyment that should bee at that day at Camelot, that is, Winchester.[1] And the king let crie that he and the king of Scotland would just against all that would come against them. And when this crie was made, thether came many knights. So there came thether the king of Northgalis, and king Anguish of Ireland, and the king with the hundred knights, and sir Galahalt the haut prince, and the king of Northumberland, and many other noble dukes and earles of divers countreys. So king Arthur made him ready to depart to these justs, and would have had the queene with him, but at that time shee would not goe, shee said, for shee was sicke and might not ride at that time. "Then me repenteth," said the king, "for

[1] *That is, Winchester.*—See before, vol. i. p. 90.

these seven yeares yee saw not such a fellowship together, except at Whisontide when sir Galahad departed from the court." "Truely," said the queene unto the king, "yee must hold me excused, I may not be there, and that me repenteth." And many deemed that the queen would not be there because of sir Launcelot du Lake, for sir Launcelot would not ride with the king; for hee said that hee was not hole of the wound the which sir Mador had given him. Wherfore the king was passing heavy and wroth, and so departed toward Winchester with his fellowship. And so by the way the king lodged in a towne called Astolat, which is now in English called Gilford,[1] and there the king lay in the castle. So when the king was departed, the queene called sir Launcelot unto her, and thus shee said, "Sir Launcelot, yee are greatly to blame thus to hold you behind my lord; what trow yee what your enemies and mine will say and deeme? nought else but see how sir Launcelot holdeth him ever behind the king and so doth the queene, for that they would have their pleasure together; and thus will they say," said the queene unto sir Launcelot, "have yee no doubt thereof."

CHAP. CXIII.—How sir Launcelot rode to Astolat, and received a sleeve to beare upon his helme at the request of a maide.

"MADAME," said sir Launcelot to the queene, "I alow your wit, it is of late come sith yee were wise, and therefore as at this time I wil be ruled by your counsaile, and this night I will take my rest, and to morrow betimes will I take my way toward Winchester. But wit yee well," said sir Launcelot unto queene Guenever, "that at those justs I wil be against the king and all his fellowship." "Yee may there doe as yee

[1] *Gilford.*—Guildford in Surrey is no doubt the place alluded to; but I am not aware that the name of Astolat, or Astolot (Caxton), is given to it in any authentic history.

list," said queene Guenever; "but by my counsaile ye shall not be against your king and your fellowship, for therein are many hardy knights of your blood, as yee wot well enough, it needeth not for to rehearse them." "Madame," said sir Launcelot, "I pray you that yee bee not displeased with mee, for I will take the adventure that God will send mee." And so on the morrow sir Launcelot went to the church and heard masse, and after brake his fast, and tooke his leave of the queene, and so departed. And then he rode so long till hee came to Astolat, that now is called Gilford, and ther it hapned him in the eventid he came unto a barons place which hight sir Bernard of Astolat; and as sir Launcelot entred into his lodging, king Arthur espied him as hee walked in a garden beside the castle, how he took his lodging, and knew him full well. "It is well said," quoth king Arthur to all the knights that were there with him, "in yonder garden beside the castle I have espied a knight which will full well play his play at the justs toward which we goe; I understand he will doe many mervailous deedes of armes." "Who is that? we pray you tell us," said the knights that were there at that time. "Yee shall not know for mee," said the king, "at this time." And so the king smiled, and went to his lodging. So as sir Launcelot was in his lodging, and in his chamber unarming him, the old baron and the hermite came unto him, makeing him reverence, and welcomed him in the best manner that hee could; but the old knight knew not sir Launcelot. "Faire sir," said sir Launcelot to his hoost, "I would pray you to lend me a shield that were not openly knowen, for mine is to much knowen." "Sir," said his hoost, "ye shall have your desire, for me seemeth ye be one of the likeliest knights of the world, and therefore I shall shew you friendship. Sir, wit yee well I have two sonnes which were but late made knights, and the eldest hight sir Tirre, and he was hurt the same day that he was made knight that he may not ride, and his shield

ye shall have, for that is not knowen, I dare say, but here, and in no place else. And my yongest sonne hight sir Lavaine, and if it please you he shall ride with you unto those justs; and hee is of his age strong and mighty, for much my heart giveth unto you that ye should bee a noble knight, therefore I beseech you tell mee your name," said sir Bernard. "As for that," said sir Launcelot, "ye must hold mee excused as at this time, and if God give me grace to speede well at the justs, I shall come againe and tell you; but I pray you heartely," said sir Launcelot, "in any wise let me have your sonne sir Lavaine with me, and that I may have his brothers shield." "Also this shall be done," said sir Bernard. This old baron had a daughter that time that was called the faire maide of Astolat, and ever shee beheld sir Launcelot wonderfully; and she cast such a love unto sir Launcelot that shee could not withdraw her love, wherefore she died; and her name was Elaine la Blaunch. So thus as shee came too and fro, shee was so hoot in her love that shee besought sir Launcelot to weare upon him at the justs a token of hers. "Faire damosell," said sir Launcelot, "and if I graunt you that, yee may say I doe more for your love then ever I did for lady or damosell." Then hee remembred him that hee would ride unto the justs disguised, and for because he had never before that time borne no manner of token of no damosell, then he bethought him that he would beare on of hers, that none of his blood thereby might know him. And then hee said, "Faire damosell, I will graunt you to weare a token of yours upon my helmet, and therefore what it is shew me." "Sir," said shee, "it is a red sleeve of mine of scarlet, well embroadered with great pearles." And so shee brought it him. So sir Launcelot received it, and said, "Never or this time did I so much for no damosell." And then sir Launcelot betooke the faire damosell his shield in keeping, and prayed her to keepe it untill he came againe. And so that night hee had merry rest and great

cheere; for ever the faire damosell Elaine was about sir Launcelot all the while that she might be suffered.

CHAP. CXIV.—How the turnement began at Winchester, and what knights were at the justs, and of other matters.

SO upon a day in the morning king Arthur and all his knights departed, for the king had taryed there three dayes to abide his knights. And so when the king was riden, sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine made them ready for to ride, and either of them had white shields, and the red sleeve sir Launcelot let carry with him. And so they tooke their leave of sir Bernard the old baron, and of his daughter the faire maide of Astolat. And then they rode so long till that they came to Camelot, which now is called Winchester. And there was great presse of knights, dukes, earles, and barons, and many noble knights; but there was sir Launcelot prively lodged by the meanes of sir Lavaine with a rich burgeis, that no man in that towne was ware what they were. And so they sojourned there till our Lady Day the Assumption, as the great feast should bee. So then trumpets began to blow unto the field, and king Arthur was set on high upon a scaffold to behold who did best. But king Arthur would not suffer sir Gawaine to goe from him, for never had sir Gawaine the better if sir Launcelot were in the field. And many times was sir Gawaine rebuked when sir Launcelot came into any justs disguised. Then some of the kings, as king Anguish of Ireland and the king of Scotland, were that time turned upon king Arthurs side. And then upon the other part was the king of Northgalis, and the king with the hundred knights, and the king of Northumberland, and sir Galahalt the haut prince. But these three kings and this one duke were passing weake to hold against king Arthurs part; for with him were the most noble knights of the world. So then they withdrew them either partie from other, and every man made him ready in his best manner to doe what he might. Then sir Launcelot made him

ready, and put on his red sleeve upon his head and fastned it. And sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine departed out of Winchester prively, and rode unto a little leaved wood behind the partie that held against king Arthurs part, and there they held them still till the parties smote together. And then came the king of Scotland and the king of Ireland on king Arthurs part, and against them came the king of Northumberland; and the king with the hundred knights smote downe the king of Northumberland,[1] and also the king with the hundred knights smote downe king Anguish of Ireland. Then sir Palomides, that was on king Arthurs part, encountred with sir Galahalt, and either of them smote downe other and either partie holpe their lords on horse-backe againe. So there began a strong assaile on both parties. And then there came in sir Brandiles, sir Sagramore le Desirous, sir Dodinas le Savage, sir Kay the seneshal, sir Griflet le fise de Dieu, sir Mordred, sir Meliot de Logris, sir Ozanna le Cueur hardy, sir Safire, sir Epinogris, and sir Galleron of Galway. All these fifteene were knights of the round table. So these with other moe came in together, and beate backe the king of Northumberland and the king of Walles. When sir Launcelot saw this, as he hoved in a little wood, he said unto sir Lavaine, "See yonder is a company of good knights, and they hold them together as boores that were chased with dogs." "That is truth," said sir Lavaine.

CHAP. CXV.—How sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine entred into the field against them of king Arthurs court, and how sir Lancelot was hurt.

OW," said sir Launcelot, "and yee will helpe me a little, yee shall see yonder fellowship which chased now these men of our side, that they shall goe as fast backward as they went

[1] *Northumberland.*—This, though supported by Caxton, is perhaps an error for Scotland.

forward." "Sir, spare not," said sir Lavaine, "for I shall doe what I may." Then sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine came in at the thickest of the presse, and there sir Launcelot smote downe sir Brandiles, sir Sagramore, sir Dodinas, sir Kay, and sir Griflet, and all this hee did with one speare. And sir Lavaine smote downe sir Lucas the butler, and sir Bediver. And then sir Lancelot gat another great speare, and there hee smote downe sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, sir Mordred, and sir Meliot de Logris; and sir Lawaine smote downe Ozanna le Cueur hardy. And then sir Launcelot drew out his sword, and there hee smote on the right hand and on the left hand, and by great force hee unhorsed sir Safire, sir Epinogris, and sir Galleron; and the knights of the round table withdrew them backe, after they had gotten their horses, as well as they might. "O mercy, Jesu," said sir Gawaine, "what knight is that I see yonder that doth so mervailous deeds of armes in the fields?" "I wote well who is that," said king Arthur, "but at this time I will not name him." "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "I would say it were sir Launcelot by the riding, and by his buffets that I see him deale; but alway me seemeth it should not bee hee, because he beareth the red sleeve upon the helme, for I wist him never yet beare token at no justs of lady nor gentlewoman." "Let him be," said king Arthur, "for he will be better known and doe more or he depart." Then the party that were against king Arthur were well comforted, and then they held them together which before hand were sore rebuked. Then sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Lionell called unto them the knights of their blood, as sir Blamore de Ganis, sir Bleoberis, sir Aliduke, sir Galihud, sir Galihodin, and sir Bellangere le Beuse. So these nine knights of sir Launcelot's kinne thrust in mightely, for they were all noble knights; and they, of great hate and despite that they had to him, thought to rebuke that noble knight sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine, for they knew them not. And so they came hurtling together, and smot

downe many knights of Northgalis and of Northumberland. And when sir Launcelot saw them fare so, hee gat a speare in his hand, and there encountred with them all at once; Sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Lionell smote him all at once with their speares.

And with force of themselfe they smote sir Launcelots horse unto the ground; and by misfortune sir Bors smote sir Launcelot through the shield into the side, and the speare brake, and the head abode still in the side. When sir Lavaine saw his maister lie upon the ground, he ranne to the king of Scotland and smote him to the ground, and by great force hee tooke his horse and brought him to sir Launcelot, and mauger them all hee made him to mount upon that horse. And then sir Launcelot gat him a great speare in his hand, and there he smote sir Bors both horse and man to the ground; and in the same wise he served sir Ector and sir Lionell; and sir Lavaine smote downe sir Blamore de Ganis. And then sir Launcelot began to draw his sword, for he felt him selfe so sore hurt, that he wend there to have had his death; and then hee smote sir Bleoberis such a buffet upon the helme that hee fell downe to the ground in a sownd; and in the same wise he served sir Aliduke and sir Galihud. And sir Lavaine smote downe sir Bellangere, that was the sonne of sir Alisaunder Lorphelin. And by that time sir Bors was horsed; and then he came with sir Ector and sir Lionell, and they three smot with their swords upon sir Launcelots helmet; and when hee felt there buffets, and his wound that was so grievous, then hee thought to doe what hee might whiles hee might endure; and then hee gave sir Bors such a buffet that hee made him to bow his head passing low; and therwith all hee rased off his helme, and might have slaine him, and so pulled him downe. And in the same manner of wise hee served sir Ector and sir Lionell, for hee might have slaine them. But when he saw their visages his heart might not serve him thereto, but left them there

lying. And then after hee hurled in among the thickest presse of them all, and did there mervailous deeds of armes that ever any man saw or heard speake of. And alway the good knight sir Lavaine was with him; and ther sir Launcelot with his sword smote and pulled downe moe then thirty knights, and the most part were of the round table. And sir Lavaine did full well that day, for hee smote downe ten knights of the round table.

CHAP. CXVI.—How sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine departed out of the field, and in what jeopardy sir Launcelot was.

H mercy, Jesu," said sir Gawaine unto king Arthur, "I mervaile what knight he is with the red sleeve." "Sir," said king Arthur, "hee will bee knowen or hee depart." And then the king let blow unto lodging, and the prise was given by herawlds to the knight with the white shield and that beare the red sleeve. Then came the king with the hundred knights, the king of Northgalis, and the king of Northumberland, and sir Galahalt the haut prince, and said unto sir Launcelot, "Faire knight, God thee blisse, formuch have ye done this day for us, therefore wee pray you that yee will come with us that yee may receive the honour and the prise, as yee have worshipfully deserved it." "My faire lords," said sir Launcelot, "wit yee well if I have deserved thankes, I have sore bought it, and that me repenteth, for I am like never to escape with my life; therfore, faire lords, I pray you that yee will suffer mee to depart where me liketh, for I am sore hurt; I take no force of none honour, for I had lever to rest me then to be lord of all the world." And therwith hee groned piteously, and rode a great gallop away from them until hee came under a woods side, and when he saw that hee was from the field nigh a mile, that hee was sure hee might not bee seene, then said hee with a high voice, "O gentle

knight sir Lavaine, helpe me that this trunchion were out of my side, for it sticheth so sore that it almost sleyeth mee." . "O mine owne lord," said sir Lavaine, "I would faine helpe you, but it dreads me sore and I draw out the trunchion that yee shall bee in perill of death." "I charge you," said sir Launcelot, "as yee love mee, draw it out." And therewith he discended from his horse, and so did sir Lavaine, and foorthwith sir Lavaine drew the trunchion out of his side; and sir Launcelot gave a great shricke and a mervailous ghastly grone, and his blood brast out nigh a pinte at once, that at the last hee sanke downe upon his buttocks and sowned paile and deadly. "Alas!" said sir Lawaine, "what shall I doe now?" And then he turned sir Launcelot into the wind, but so he lay there nigh halfe an houer as he had been dead; and so at the last sir Launcelot cast up his eies, and said, "O sir Lavaine, helpe mee that I were upon my horse, for heerefast by within these two miles is a gentle hermite, which sometime was a noble knight and a great lord of possessions, and for great goodnesse hee hath taken him unto wilfull povertie, and hath forsaken his possessions, and his name is sir Bawdewine of Britaine, and hee is a full noble surgion and a right good lech. Now let se, helpe me up, that I were there, for alway my hart giveth me that I shall not die of my cosin germaines hands." And then with great paine sir Lavaine holpe him upon his horse, and then they rode a great gallop together, and ever sir Launcelot bled that it ran downe to the earth; and so by fortune they came unto that heremitage, the which was under a wood, and a great clyffe on the other side, and a faire water running under it. And then sir Lavaine beat on the gate with the end of his speare, and cried, "Let me in for Christs sake!" And then came there a faire child to them, and asked them what they would. "Faire sonne," said sir Lavaine, "goe and pray thy lord the hermit, for Gods sake, to let in heere a knight which is right sore wounded, and this day tell thy

lord that I saw him do more deeds of armes then ever I heard say that any man did." So the child went in lightly, and then hee brought the hermite, that was a passing good man. So when sir Lavaine saw him, hee praied him for Gods sake of succour. "What knight is hee?" said the hermite; "is hee of the house of king Arthur or not?" "I wote not," said sir Lavaine, "what hee is, nor what is his name, but wel I wote I saw him doe mervailously this day as of deeds of armes." "On whose part was he?" said the hermite. "Sir," said sir Lavaine, "hee was this day against king Arthur, and there hee wone the prise of all the knights of the round table." "I have seene the day," said the hermite, "I would have loved him the worse because hee was against my lord king Arthur, for I was somtime one of the fellowship of the round table, but now, I thanke God, I am otherwise disposed. But where is hee? let me see him." Then sir Lavaine brought the hermit where as the most noble knight sir Launcelot was.

CHAP. CXVII.—How sir Launcelot was brought unto an hermite for to be healed of his wound, and of other matters.

AND when the hermite beheld him as he sat leaning upon his saddle-bow, ever bleeding piteously, and alway the knight hermit thought that he should know him, but he could not bring him to knowledge, because hee was so pale for bleeding. "What knight are ye," said the hermit, "and where weare ye borne?" "Faire lord," said sir Launcelot, "I am a stranger and a knight adventurous, that laboureth throughout many realms for to win worship." Then the hermite advised him better, and saw by a wound on the cheeke that he was sir Launcelot. "Alas!" said the hermite, "mine owne lord, why hide yee your name from me? forsooth I ought to know you of right, for yee are the most noble knight of the world, for well I know you for sir

Launcelot." "Sir," said he, "sith ye know me, helpe me and ye may, for Christs sake, for I would be out of this paine at once, eithir to death or to life." "Have yee no doubt," said the hermite, "yee shall live and fare right well." And so the hermite called to him two of his servants; and so hee and his servants beare him into the hermitage, and lightly unarmed him, and laid him in his bed. And then anon the hermite stenched the blood; and then he made him to drinke good wine; so by that sir Launcelot was right well refreshed, and came to himselfe againe. For in those daies it was not the guise of hermites as it now is in these daies, for there were no hermites in those daies but that they had beene men of worship and of prowesse, and those hermites held great housholds, and refreshed people that were in distres. Now turne we unto king Arthur, and leave we sir Launcelot in the hermitage. So when the kings were come together on both parties, and the great feast should be holden, king Arthur asked the king of Northgalis and his fellowship where was the knight that beare the red sleeve, "Bring him before me, that hee may have his laude and honour and the prise, as it is right." Then spake sir Galahalt the haut prince and the king with the hundred knights: "Wee suppose that knight is mischieved, and that he is never like to see you nor none of us all, and that is the most greatest pittie that ever wee wist of any knight." "Alas!" said king Arthur, "how may this be? is he so hurt? What is his name?" said king Arthur. "Truely," said they all, "wee know not his name, nor from whence hee came, nor whether he would." "Alas!" said king Arthur, "these be to me the worst tidings that came to mee this seaven yeare; for I would not for all the lands I have to know and wit it were so that noble knight were slaine." "Know yee him?" said they all. "As for that," said king Arthur, "whether I know him or not, yee shall not wit for mee what hee is, but Almightie Jesu sent mee good tidings of him." And so

said they all. "By my head," said sir Gawaine, "if it be so that the good knight be so sore hurt, it is great damage and pittie to all this land, for hee is one of the noblest knights that ever I saw in a field handle a speare or a sword; and if he may be found, I shall finde him, for I am sure that he is not farre from this towne." "Beare you well," said king Arthur, "and yee may find him, without that he be in such a plight that he may not bestirre himselfe." "Jesu defend," said sir Gawain, "but I shall know what he is and if I may find him." Right so sir Gawaine took a squire with him, and rode upon two hacknies all about Camelot within sixe or seaven mile; but as hee went so he came againe, and could here no word of him. Then within two dayes king Arthur and all the fellowship returned to London againe; and so as they rode by the way, it hapned sir Gawaine at Astolat to lodge with sir Bernard, where as sir Launcelot was lodged. And so as sir Gawaine was in his chamber for to take his rest, sir Bernard the old baron came to him, and also his faire daughter Elaine, for to cheere him, and to aske him what tidings he knew, and who did best at the turneiment at Winchester. "So God helpe me," said sir Gawaine, "there were two knights which beare two white shields, but the one of them beare a red sleeve upon his head, and certainely he was one of the best knights that ever I saw just in field; for I dare make it good," said sir Gawaine, "that one knight with the red sleeve smote downe fortie valiant knights of the round table, and his fellow did right well and right worshipfully." "Now blessed bee God," said the faire maide of Astolat, "that the good knight sped so well, for hee is the man in the world the which I first loved, and truely he shall bee the last man that ever after I shall love." "Now, faire maide," said sir Gawaine, "is that good knight your love?" "Certainely," said she; "wit ye wel he is my love." "Then know yee his name?" said sir Gawaine. "Nay, truly," said the maide, "I know

not his name, nor from whence hee came; but to say that I love him, I promise God and you that I love him." "How had yee knowledge of him first?" said sir Gawaine.

CHAP. CXVIII.—How sir Gawaine was lodged with the lord of Astolat, and ther hee had knowledge that it was sir Launcelot that beare the red sleeve.

THEN shee told him as yee have heard before, and how her father betooke him her brother to doe him service, and how her father lent him her brother sir Tires shield, and heere with me hee left his owne shield." "For what cause did hee so?" said sir Gawaine. "For this cause," said the damosell; "for his shield was too well knowen among many noble knights." "Ah, faire damosell," said sir Gawaine, "please it you for to let me have a sight of that shield." "Sir," said she, "it is in my chamber covered with a case, and if it will please you to come in with me ye shall see it." "Not so," said sir Bernard unto his daughter; "let send for it." So when the shield was come, sir Gawaine tooke off the case, and when he beheld that shield he knew anon that it was sir Launcelots shield, and his owne armes. "Ah Jesu, mercy!" said sir Gawaine, "now is my heart more heavier then ever it was before." "Why?" said the damosell Elaine. "For I have a great cause," said sir Gawaine; "is that knight that oweth that shield your love?" "Yee, truely," said shee, "my love he is, God would that I were his love." "So God me speede," said sir Gawaine, "faire damosell, yee love the most honourable knight of the world, and the man of most worship." "So me thought ever," said the damosell, "for never or that time for no knight that ever I saw loved I never none erst." "God graunt," said sir Gawaine, "that either of you may rejoyce other, but that is in a great adventure; but truely," said sir Gawaine unto the damosell, "yee may

say yee have a faire grace, for why I have knowen that noble knight this foureteene[1] yeares, and never or that day I or none other knight, I dare make it good, saw nor heard that ever hee beare token or signe of no lady, gentlewoman, nor maide at no justs nor turneyment; and therefore, faire maide," said sir Gawaine, "ye are much beholden to give him thankes; but I dread me," said sir Gawaine, "yee shall never see him in this world, and that is great pittie as ever was of earthly knight." "Alas!" said she, "how may this bee? is hee slaine?" "I say not so," said sir Gawaine, "but wit yee well that hee is grievously wounded by all manner of signes, and by mens sight more likelyer to bee dead then to bee alive, and wit ye well hee is the noble knight sir Launcelot, for by his shield I know him." "Alas!" said the faire maide Elaine, "how may it be? what was his hurt?" "Truly," said sir Gawaine, "the man in the world that loveth him best hurt him so; and I dare say," said sir Gawaine, "and that knight that hurt him knew the very certaine that hee had hurt sir Launcelot, it would bee the most sorrow that ever came to his heart." "Now, faire father," said Elaine, "I require you give mee leave to ride and to seeke him, or else I wot well I shall goe out of my mind, for I shall never stint till that I have found him and my brother sir Lavaine." "Do as ye thinke best," said her father, "for mee right sore repenteth of the hurt of that noble knight." So the maide made her ready before sir Gawaine, making great dole. Then one the morrow sir Gawaine came unto king Arthur, and told him how hee had found sir Launcelots shield in the keeping of the faire maide of Astolat. "All that I knew," said king Arthur," and that caused me I would not suffer you to have to doe at the great justs; for I espied him," said king Arthur, "when he came into his lodging, full late in the evening, in Astolat; but mervaile have I," said king Arthur, "that ever he would beare any signe of any

[1] *Foureteene.—Four and twenty yere*, Caxton.

damosell, for or now I never heard say nor knew that ever he bear any token of no earthly woman." "By my head," said sir Gawaine, "the faire maide of Astolat loveth sir Launcelot mervailously well, but what it meaneth I cannot say; and shee is ridden after him for to seeke him."

So king Arthur and all his court came to London, and there sir Gawaine openly disclosed unto all the court that it was the noble knight sir Launcelot that justed best.

CHAP. CXIX.—Of the great sorrow that sir Bors made for the hurt of sir Launcelot, and of great anger that queene Guenever had because sir Launcelot beare the red sleeve.

AND when sir Bors heard that, wit ye wel he was a heavie and a sorrowfull man, and so were all his kinsmen. But when queene Guenever wist that sir Launcelot beare the red sleeve of the faire maide of Astolat, shee was nigh out of her minde for anger and wrath; and then shee sent for sir Bors de Ganis in all the hast that might bee. So when sir Bors came afore the queene, shee said unto him, "Ah! sir Bors, have ye heard say how falsly sir Launcelot hath betraied mee?" "Alas! madame," said sir Bors, "I am afraid he hath betraied himselfe and us all." "No force," said the queene, "though that he bee destroyed, for he is but a false traitorous knight." "Madame," said sir Bors, "I beseech you say yee not so, for wit yee well I may not heere such language of him." "Why, sir Bors," said the queene, "should I not call him traitour, when hee beare the red sleeve upon his head at Winchester at the grat turneiment?" "Madame," said sir Bors, "that red sleeve bearing repenteth mee sore, but I dare say hee did it to none evill entent, but for this cause hee beare the red sleeve, that none of us that bee of his blood should know him. For or then we nor none of us all never knew that ever he beare token or signe of maide, lady, nor gentlewoman." "Fie on him!" said the queene; "notwithstanding for all his

pride and bouldnesse,[1] yet there yee proved your selfe his better." "Nay, madame," said sir Bors, "say yee never more so, for hee beate mee and my fellowes, and might have slaine us if hee had would." "Fie on him!" said queene Guenever, "for I heard sir Gawaine say before my lord Arthur that mervaile it were to tell the great love that is betweene the faire maide of Astolat and him." "Madame," said sir Bors, "I may not warne sir Gawaine to say what it pleased him, but I dare say as for my lord sir Launcelot, that he loveth no lady, gentlewoman, nor maide, but all he loveth in like much; and therfore, madame," said sir Bors, "yee may say what yee will, but wit yee well that I will hast me to seeke him and find him where so ever hee bee, and God send mee good tidings of him."

And so leave wee them there, and speake we of sir Launcelot that lay in great perill. So as the faire maide Elaine came to Winchester, shee sought there all about, and by fortune sir Lavaine was riden to play him and to enchafe[2] his horse. And anon as faire Elaine saw him she knew him, and then she cried aloude unto him; and when hee heard her anon hee came unto her. And then she asked her brother, "How fareth my lord sir Launcelot?" "Who told you, sister, that my lords name was sir Launcelot?" Then shee told him how sir Gawaine by his shield knew him. So they rode together till they came unto the hermitage, and anon shee alighted; so sir Lavaine brought her unto sir Launcelot. And when shee saw him lie so sicke and pale in his bed, shee might not speake, but sodainly shee fell unto the ground in a sowne, and there shee lay a great while. And when shee was releeved, shee sighed and said, "My lord sir Launcelot, alas! why goe ye in this plight?" and then shee sowned againe. And then sir Launcelot praied sir Lavaine to take her up and to bring her to him; and when shee came to her selfe againe, sir Launcelot kissed her, and said, "Faire maide, why fare

[1] *Bouldnesse.—Bobaunce*, Caxton. [2] *To enchafe.*—To heat.

yee thus? yee put mee to paine; wherfore make yee no more such cheere, for and ye be come to comfort me yee be right welcome, and of this little hurt that I have I shall bee full hastely hole by the grace of God. But I mervaile," said sir Lancelot, "who told you my name." Then the faire maide told him al, how sir Gawaine was lodged with her father, "and there by your shield he discovered your name." "Alas!" said sir Lancelot, "me sore repenteth that my name is knowen, for I am sure that it will turne to anger." And then sir Launcelot compassed in his mind that sir Gawaine would tell queene Guenever how hee beare the red sleeve and for whom, that he wist well that it would turne to great anger. So this maide Elaine never went from sir Launcelot, but watched him daie and night, and gave such attendance upon him, there was never woman did more kindlyer for man then shee did. Then sir Launcelot praied sir Lavaine to make espies in Winchester for sir Bors if he came there, and told him by what token he should know him, by a wound in his forehead. "For well I am sure," said sir Launcelot, "that sir Bors will seeke mee, for hee is the good knight that hurt me."

CHAP. CXX.—How sir Bors sought sir Lancelot and found him in the hermitage, and of the lamentation betweene them.

OW turne we unto sir Bors de Ganis, that came to Winchester to seeke after his cosin sir Launcelot. And so when hee came to Winchester, anon there were men that sir Lavaine had made to lie in watch for such a man, and anon sir Lavaine had warning thereof. And then sir Lavaine came to Winchester and found sir Bors, and there he told him what hee was, and what his name was. "Now, courteous knight," said sir Bors, "I require you that yee will bring me unto my lord sir Launcelot." "Sir," said sir Lavaine, "take your horse, and within this houre yee shall see him."

And so they departed, and came unto the hermitage where sir Launcelot was; and when sir Bors saw sir Launcelot lie in his bed all pale and discoloured, anon sir Bors lost his countenance, and for kindnesse[1] and for pitie he might not speake, but wept ful tenderly a great while. And then when hee might speake, hee said unto him thus, "O my lord sir Launcelot, God bless you and send you hasty recovery, and full heavy am I of my misfortune and of mine unhappinesse, for now I may call my selfe unhappy, and I dread and feare mee that God is greatly displeased with me, that hee would suffer me to have such a shame for to hurt you that are all our leader and all our worship, and therefore I call my selfe unhappy. Alas! that ever such a captife[2] knight as I am should have power by unhappinesse to hurt the most noble knight of all the world, where I so shamefully set upon you and overcharged you, and where as yee might have slaine mee yee saved mee, and so did not I, for I and my blood did to you our uttermost. I mervaile," said sir Bors, "that my heart or blood would serve mee; wherefore, my lord sir Launcelot, I aske you mercy." "Faire cosin," said sir Launcelot, "yee are right hartely welcome, and wit yee well yee say overmuch to please mee which pleaseth me not; for why I have the same I sought, for I would with pride have overcome you everyech one; and there in my pride I was nigh slaine, and that was through mine owne default, for I might have given you warning of my beeing there, and then had I not beene hurt. For it is an old said saw, 'There is an hard battaile where as kinne and freendship doe battaile either against other, there may bee no mercy but mortall warre.' Therefore, faire cosin," said Launcelot, "let this speach overpasse, and all shall bee welcome that God sendeth, and let

[1] *Kindnesse.*—The natural feeling between kinsmen.

[2] *Captife.*—*Caytyf*, Caxton. It is curious that the later edition should have given such a literal rendering of the word *caitiff*, which is, of course, here used in its secondary sense.

us leave of this matter, and let us speake of some rejoycing; for this that is done may not bee undone, and let us find some remedy how soone that I may bee hole." Then sir Bors leaned upon his beds side, and there hee told sir Launcelot how the queene was passing wroth with him because he weare the red sleeve at the great justs. And there sir Bors told him all how sir Gawaine discovered it by his shield which he left with the faire maide of Astolat. "Then is the queene wroth," said sir Lancelot, "and therefore am I right heavy, for I deserved no wrath, for all that I did was because that I would not bee knowen." "Right so excused I you," said sir Bors, "but all was in vaine; for shee said more larglier to mee then I to you now. But is this shee," said sir Bors, "that is so busie about you, that men call the faire maide of Astolat?" "She it is," said sir Launcelot, "which by no manner of meanes I can put from mee." "Why should ye put her from you?" said sir Bors; "shee is a passing faire damosell, and well beseene and well taught; and would God, faire cosin," said sir Bors, "that yee could love her, but as to that I may not nor dare not counsaile you; but I see well," said sir Bors, "by her diligence about you that shee loveth you entierly." "That mee repenteth," said sir Launcelot. "Sir," said sir Bors, "shee is not the first that hath lost her paine upon you, and that is the more pittie." And so they talked of many other things mo; and so within three or foure daies sir Launcelot was big and strong againe.

CHAP. CXXI.—How sir Launcelot armed him for to assay himselfe if hee might beare armes, and how his wound brake out againe.

THEN sir Bors told sir Launcelot how that there was sworne a great turneyment and justs betweene king Arthur and the king of Northgalis, that should be upon Allhalowmasse day beside Winchester. "Is that truth?" said sir Launcelot;

"then shall ye abide still with mee a little while until that I be whole, for I feele my selfe right big and strong." "Blessed be God," said sir Bors. Then they abode there almost a moneth together; and ever this faire maide Elaine did her diligence and labour night and day unto sir Launcelot, that there was never child more meeker unto the father nor wife unto her husband then was that faire maide of Astolat; wherefore sir Bors was greatly displeased[1] with her. So upon a day, by the assent of sir Launcelot, sir Bors and sir Lavaine made the hermite to goe seeke in woods for divers herbs, and so sir Launcelot made faire Elaine for to gather herbs for him to make him a baine.[2] In the meane while sir Launcelot made him to arme him at all points,[3] and there he thought for to assay his armour and his speare for his hurt or not. And when hee was upon his horse, hee spurred him fiersly, and his horse was passing lusty and fresh because hee was not laboured a moneth before. And then sir Launcelot couched his speare in the rest; so that courser lept mightely when hee felte the spurres and him that was upon him, the which was the noblest knight[4] of the world, hee steared[5] him rigorously, and he stifly and stably kept still the speare in the rest. And therewith sir Launcelot strained himselfe so straightly with so great force for to get his horse forward, that the botome of the wound brake both within and without, and therewith the blood came out so fiersly that hee felt himselfe so feeble that hee might not sit upon his horse. And then sir Launcelot cried unto sir Bors, "Ah! sir Bors and sir Lavaine, helpe mee, for I come unto mine end." And therewith hee fell downe on the one side unto the ground like a dead corps. And then sir Bors and sir Lavaine came to him,

[1] *Displeased.—Pleasyd*, Caxton, which is probably the correct reading, though either would make sense.

[2] *Baine.*—A bath.

[3] *At all points.—At alle pyeces*, Caxton.

[4] *Knight.—Noblest hors*, Caxton.

[5] *Steared.*—i. e. stirred. *Strayned*, Caxton.

making out of measure great sorrow; and so by fortune the maide Elaine heard their sorrow and dole, and then shee came thither. And when she found sir Launcelot there armed in the place, she cried and wept as she had beene wood, and then she kissed him and did what she might to wake him. And then shee rebuked her brother and sir Bors, and called them both false traitours, and why they would take him out of his bed; there she cried and said she would appeale them of his death. With this came the holy hermit sir Baudwine of Britaine, and when hee found sir Launcelot in that plight hee said but little, but wit yee well hee was right wroth. And then hee said to them, "Let us have him in." And so they all beare him into the hermitage, and unarmed him and laide him in his bed, and evermore his wound bled piteously, but hee sturred no limme of his body. Then the knight hermit put a thing in his nose, and a little deale of water in his mouth, and then sir Launcelot wakned out of his sowne. And then the hermit staunched his bleeding; and when hee might speake, hee asked sir Launcelot why hee put his life in jeopardy. "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "for because I weend I had beene strong enough, and also sir Bors told me that there should be at All-halowmasse a great justs betweene king Arthur and the king of Northgalis, and therefore I thought to assay my selfe if I might bee there or not." "Ah! sir Launcelot," said the heremit, "your heart and your courage will never be done untill your last daie, but yee shall do now by my counsaile: let sir Bors depart from you, and let him doe at that turneyment what hee may; and by the grace of God," said the knight hermit, "by that the turneyment be done, and ye come hither againe, sir Launcelot shall be as hoole as yee, so that hee will bee ruled by mee."

CHAP. CXXII.—How sir Bors returned, and told tidings of sir Launcelot, and of the turnement, and unto whom the prise was given.

AND then sir Bors made him ready to depart from sir Launcelot. And then sir Launcelot said, "Faire cosin sir Bors, recommend me unto all them unto whom I ought to recommend mee unto, and I pray you enforce your selfe at that justs that ye may be best, for my love, and heere shall I abide you, at the mercy of God, till yee come againe." And so sir Bors departed and came to the court of king Arthur, and told them in what place he had left sir Launcelot. "That me repenteth," said the king; "but sith he shall have his life, we all may thank God." And there sir Bors told the queene in what great jeopardie sir Launcelot was when he would assay his horse, "and al that he did, madame, was for the love of you, because hee would have beene at this turnement." "Fie on him, recreaunt knight!" said the queene; "for wit ye well I am right sorie and he shall have his life." "His life shall hee have," said sir Bors, "and who that would otherwise, except you, madame, wee that bee of his blood should helpe to short their lives. But, madame," said sir Bors, "ye have bine oftentimes displeased with my lord sir Launcelot, but at all times at the end ye find him a true knight." And so he departed. And then every knight of the round table that was there present at that time made them ready to be at that justs at All-halowmasse, and thither drew many knights of many countries. And as All-halowmas drew neere, thither came the king of Northgalis, and the king with the hundred knights, and sir Galahalt the haut prince of Surlus; and thither came king Anguish of Ireland, and the king of Scotland; so these three knights came on king Arthurs part. And so that day sir Gawaine did great deedes of armes, and began first; and the heraulds numbred that sir Gawaine smot downe twenty knights. Then came

in at that same time sir Bors de Ganis, and he was numbred that he had smitten downe twentie knights; and therfore the prise was given betweene them both, for they began first and longest endured. Also sir Gareth did that day great deedes of armes, for he smote downe and pulled downe thirtie knights; but when he had done these deeds he taryed not, but so departed, and therefore he lost his prise. And sir Palomides did great deedes of armes that day, for hee smote downe twenty knights, but hee departed sodainly. And men deemed that sir Gareth and he rode together to some adventure.

So when this turnement was done, sir Bors departed and rode till he came to sir Launcelot his cosin; and then he found him walking on his feete, and there either made great joy of other. And so sir Bors told sir Launcelot of all the justs like as ye have heard. "I mervaile," said sir Launcelot, "that sir Gareth when he had done such deedes of armes that he would not tary." "Thereof wee mervailed all," said sir Bors, "for but if it where you, or sir Tristram, or sir Lamorake de Galis, I saw never knight beare downe so many in so little a while as did sir Gareth, and anon hee was gone wee wist not where." "By my head," said sir Launcelot, "hee is a noble knight and a mighty man and well breathed; and if that he were strongly assaied," said sir Launcelot, "I would deeme he were good enough for any man that beareth life. And he is a gentle knight, curteous, true, and bounteous, meeke and mild, and in him is no manner of male engin,[1] but plaine, faithfull, and true." So then they made them ready to depart from the hermite. And so upon a day they tooke their horses and tooke Elaine le Blaunch with them; and when they came to Astolat, there they were well lodged and had greate cheare of sir Bernard the old baron and of sir Tirre his sonne. And so on the morrow when sir Launcelot should depart, faire Elaine brought her father with her and her two brethren sir Tirre and sir Lavaine, and thus she said.

[1] *Male engin.*—Malice.

CHAP. CXXIII.—Of the great lamentation that the faire maide of Astolat made when sir Launcelot should depart, and how she died for his love.

MY lord sir Launcelot, now I see that yee will depart; faire and curteous knight, have mercy upon me, and suffer mee not to die for your love." "What would yee that I did?" said sir Launcelot. "I would have you unto my husband," said the maide Elaine. "Faire damosell, I thanke you," said sir Lancelot; "but certainely," said hee, "I cast mee never to bee married." "Then, faire knight," said shee, "will yee bee my paramour?" "Jesu defend mee!" said sir Launcelot, "for then should I reward your father and your brother full evil for their great goodnesse." "Alas!" said she, "then must I needes die for your love." "Ye shall not," said sir Launcelot, "for wit yee well, faire damosell, that I might have beene married and I had would, but I never applyed mee to bee married; but because, faire damosell, that yee will love mee as yee say yee doe, I will, for your good love and kindnesse, shew you some goodnesse, and that is this: that wheresoever yee will set your heart upon some good knight that will wed you, I shall give you together a thousand pound yearely to you and to your heires; thus much will I give you, faire maide, for your kindnesse, and alway while I live to be your owne knight." "Of all this," said the damosell, "I will none, for but if ye wil wed mee, or else be my paramour at the least, wit ye well, sir Launcelot, my good daies are done." "Faire damosell," said sir Launcelot, "of these two things yee must pardon me." Then she shriked shrilly,[1] and fell downe to the ground in a sowne; and then gentlewomen beare her into her chamber, and there she made ever much sorrow. And then sir Launcelot would depart; and ther hee asked sir Lavaine what he would doe. "What should

[1] *Shrilly.—Shryked shyrly*, Caxton.

I doe," said sir Lavaine, "but follow you, but if ye drive mee from you?" Then came sir Bernard to sir Launcelot, and said unto him thus, "I can not see but that my daughter Elaine will die for your sake." "I may not doe thereto," said sir Launcelot, "for that me sore repenteth, for I report mee unto your selfe that my proffer is faire; and me repenteth," said sir Launcelot, "that she loveth mee as shee doth; I was never the causer of it, for I report me unto your sonne, I early nor late proffered her bountie nor faire behests. And as for me," said sir Launcelot, "I dare doe all that a good knight should doe, that shee is a cleane maide for mee, both for deede and for will; and I am right heavie of her distresse, for shee is a full faire maide, good and gentle, and right well taught." "Father," said sir Lavaine, "I dare mak it good that shee is a clean maid as for my lord sir Launcelot; but shee doth as I doe, for sithence that I first saw my lord sir Launcelot, I could never depart from him, nor nought I will and I may follow him." Then sir Launcelot tooke his leave, and so they departed, and came to Winchester. And when king Arthur wist that sir Launcelot was come hole and sound, the king made great joy of him, and so did sir Gawaine and all the knights of the round table, except sir Agrawaine and sir Mordred. And also queene Guenever was wood wroth with sir Launcelot, and would by no meanes speake with him, but estranged her selfe from him; and sir Launcelot made all the meanes that hee might to speake with the queene, but it would not be.

Now speake we of the faire maide of Astolate, which made such sorrow day and night that she never slept, eate, nor dranke; and alway she made her complaint unto sir Launcelot. So when shee had thus endured about ten dayes, that shee felt that shee must needs passe out of this world, then shee shrove her cleane, and received her creatour, and ever shee complained still upon sir Launcelot. Then her ghostly father bad her leave such thoughts.

Then said shee, "Why should I leave such thoughts? am I not an earthly woman? and all the while the breath is in my body, I may complaine, for my beleeve is that I doe none offence, though I love an earthly man, and I take God unto my record I never loved non but sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall; and a cleane maiden I am for him and for all other; and sith it is the suffrance of God that I shall die for the love of so noble a knight, I beseech the high Father of heaven for to have mercy upon my soule, and that mine innumerable paines which I suffer may be allegiance[1] of part of my sinnes. For, our swete Saviour Jesu Christ," said the maiden, "I take thee to record I was never greater offender against thy lawes but that I loved this noble knight sir Launcelot out of all measure, and of my selfe, good Lord, I might not withstand the fervent love wherfore I have my death." And then shee called her father sir Bernard, and her brother sir Tirre, and heartely shee praied her father that her brother might write a letter like as she would endite it. And so his father graunted her. And when the letter was written word by word like as shee had devised, then shee prayed her father that shee might bee watched untill she were dead, "And while my body is whole, let this letter be put into my right hand, and my hand bound fast with the letter untill that I bee cold, and let me be put in a faire bed with all the richest clothes that I have about me, and so let my bed and all my rich clothes be laide with me in a chariot to the next place where as the Thamse is, and there let me bee put in a barge, and but one man with me, such as yee trust, to stere me thither, and that my barge be covered with blacke samite over and over. Thus, father, I beseech you let me be done." So her father graunted her faithfully that all this thing should bee done like as shee had devised. Then her father and her brother made great dole, for, when this was done, anon shee died.

[1] *Allegiance.*—Relief; mitigation.

And so when shee was dead, the corps and the bed and all was led the next[1] way unto the Thamse, and there a man and the corps and all were put in a barge on the Thamse, and so the man steered the barge to Westminster, and there hee rowed a great while too and fro or any man espied it.

CHAP. CXXIV.—How the corps of the faire maide of Astolat arrived before king Arthur, and of the burying, and how sir Launcelot offred the masse peny.[2]

SO by fortune king Arthur and queene Guenever were speaking together at a window; and so as they looked into the Thamse, they espied the blacke barge, and had mervaile what it might meane. Then the king called sir Kay, and shewed him it. "Sir," said sir Kay, "wit yee well that there is some new tidings." "Go ye thither," said the king unto sir Kay, "and take with you sir Brandiles and sir Agravaine, and bring me ready word what is there." Then these three knights departed, and came to the barge, and went in; and there they found the fairest corps lying in a rich bed that ever they saw, and a poore man sitting in the end of the barge, and no word would he speake. So these three knights returned unto the king againe, and told him what they had found. "That faire corps will I see," said king Arthur. And then the king tooke the queene by the hand and went thither. Then the king made the barge to be holden fast; and then the king and the queene went in, with certaine knights with them, and ther they saw a faire gentlewoman lying in a rich bed, covered unto her middell with many rich clothes, and all was of cloth of gold; and shee lay as though she had smiled. Then the queene espied the letter in the right hand, and told the king thereof. Then the king tooke it in his hand, and said, "Now I am sure this

[1] *Next.*—Nearest. [2] *Masse peny.*—The offering at the altar.

letter will tell what she was, and why shee is come hither." Then the king and the queene went out of the barge; and the king commaunded certaine men to waite upon the barge; and so when the king was come within his chamber, he called many knights about him, and said that hee would wit openly what was written within that letter. Then the king brake it open, and made a clarke to read it. And this was the entent of the letter:

"Most noble knight, my lord sir Launcelot du Lake, now hath death made us two at debate for your love; I was your lover, that men called the faire maiden of Astolat; therefore unto all ladies I make my moone; yet for my soule that yee pray, and bury me at the least, and offer ye my masse peny. This is my last request; and a cleane maide I died, I take God to my witnesse. Pray for my soule, sir Launcelot, as thou art a knight pearles." This was all the substance of the letter. And when it was red, the queene and all the knights wept for pittie of the dolefull complaints. Then was sir Launcelot sent for. And when hee was come, king Arthur made the letter to be red to him. And when sir Launcelot had heard it word by word, hee said, "My lord king Arthur, wit you well that I am right heavy of the death of this faire damosell; God knoweth I was never causer of her death by my will, and that I will report mee unto her owne brother, here hee is, sir Lavaine. I will not say nay," said sir Launcelot, "but that shee was both faire and good, and much I was beholden unto her, but shee loved me out of measure." "Yee might have shewed her," said the queene, "some bountie and gentlenesse, that ye might have preserved her life." "Madame," said sir Launcelot, "shee would none other way bee answered but that shee would bee my wife, or else my paramour, and of these two I would not graunt her; but I proffered her, for her good love which shee shewed me, a thousand pound yearely to her and her heires, and to wed any manner of knight that she could find best to love in

her heart; for, madame," said sir Launcelot, "I love not to bee constrained to love, for love must arise of the heart, and not by constraint." "That is truth," said king Arthur and many knights; "love is free in himselfe, and never wil be bound, for where hee is bound hee loseth himselfe." Then said the king unto sir Launcelot, "It will be your worship that ye oversee that shee bee buried worshipfully." "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "that shall bee done as I can best devise." And so many knights went thether to behold the faire dead maide. And on the morrow shee was richly buried; and sir Launcelot offered her masse peny, and all the knights of the round table that were there at that time offered with sir Launcelot. And then when all was done, the poore men went againe with the barge. Then the queene sent for sir Launcelot, and praied him of mercy, for because she had been wroth with him causeles. "This is not the first time," said sir Launcelot, "that yee have beene displeased with me causeles; but, madame, ever I must suffer you, but what sorrow that I endure yee take no force." So this passed foorth all that winter, with all manner of hunting and hawking, and justs and turneys were many betweene many great lords; and ever in all manner of place sir Lavaine gat great worship, that hee was nobly renowned among many of the knights of the round table. Thus it passed on untill Christmasse, and every day there were justs made for a diamond, that who soever just best should have a diamond. But sir Launcelot would not just, but if it were a great justs cried; but sir Lavaine justed there all the Christmasse passing well, and most was praised, for there were but few that did so well as hee, wherefore all manner of knights deemed that sir Lavaine should be made knight of the round table at the next high feast of Pentecost.

So after Christmasse king Arthur let call to him many of his knights, and there they advised them together to make a party, and a great turneyment and justs. And the

king of Northgalis said unto king Arthur that hee would have on his part king Anguish of Ireland, and the king with the hundred knights, and the king of Northumberland, and sir Galahalt the haut prince. So these foure kings and this mighty duke tooke a part against king Arthur and the knights of the round table; and the cry was made that the day of the justs should be beside Westminster on Candlemasse day, wherof many knights were full glad, and made them ready to be at that justs in the freshest manner that they could. Then queene Guenever sent for sir Launcelot; and when hee was come, shee said to him in this manner, "I warne you that yee ride no more in no justs nor turneyment, but that your kinsmen may know you; for at these justs that shall bee ye shall have of me a sleeve of cloth of gold; and I pray you, for my sake, enforce your selfe so there that men may speake of you worship. But I charge you, as yee will have my love, that yee warne your kinsmen that yee will beare that day the sleeve of cloth of gold upon your helmet." "Madame," said sir Launcelot, "your desire shall be done." And so either made of other great joy. And when sir Launcelot saw his time, hee told sir Bors that he would depart, and no mo with him but sir Lavaine, unto the good hermit that dwelled in the forrest of Windsore, whose name was sir Brastias, and there he thought to rest him, and to take all the ease that hee might, because hee would bee fresh at that day of justs. When sir Launcelot and sir Lavaine were ready, they departed, that no creature wist where hee was become but the noble men of his blood. And so when hee was come unto the hermitage, wit you well hee had good cheare; and so daily sir Launcelot would go to a well fast by the hermitage, and there hee would lie downe and see the well spring and bubble, and somtime he slept there. So at that time there was a lady dwelled in that forrest, and shee was a great huntresse, and daily she used to hunt, and alway she beare her bow with her; and no

men went never with her, but alwayes women, and they were shooters, and could well kill a deere, both at the stalke [1] and at the trest; and they daiely beare bowes and arrowes, hornes, and wood knives, and many good hounds they had, both for the string and for a bait. So it hapned that this lady the huntresse had baited her hounds for the bow at a barren hind, and this barren hind tooke her flight over heathes and woods; and ever this lady and part of her gentlewomen costed [2] the hind, and checked it by the noyse of the hounds, for to have met with the hind at some water; and so it hapned that the same hind came to the well whereas sir Launcelot was sleeping and slumbring; and so the hind when she came to the well for heate she went to the soyle,[3] and there she lay a great while, and the hound came fast after, and umbecast [4] about, for she had lost the perfect fewt [5] of the hind. Right so there came the lady huntresse, which knew by her hound that the hind was at the soyle in that well. And there shee came stifly, and found the hind; and anon shee put a broad arow in her bow, and shot at the hinde, and overshot the hinde, and by misfortune the broad arrow smote sir Launcelot in the thicke of the buttocke over the barbes. When sir Launcelot felt himselfe so hurt, hee hurled up woodly, and saw the lady which had smitten him; and then when he saw shee was a woman, he said thus: "Lady or damosell, what that thou be, in an evill time beare thou a bow, the devill made thee a shooter."

[1] *Stalke . . . trest.*—All these are technical terms in hunting, the exact explanation of which must be sought in the old treatises on venerie. The knowledge and correct use of such terms was formerly considered a very important part of the education of a gentleman.

[2] *Costed.*—Kept up with it in a parallel course, for the purpose of turning it.

[3] *Soyle.*—To take soil was an old hunting term equivalent to going into the water.

[4] *Umbecast.*—Made a circuit about.

[5] *Fewt.*—The track.

CHAP. CXXV.—How sir Launcelot, after that hee was hurt of a gentlewoman, came unto an hermite, and of other matters.

OW mercy, faire sir," said the lady, "I am a gentlewoman that useth here in this forrest hunting, and our Lord knoweth I saw you not, but as heere was a barren hind at the soyle in the well, and I wend to have done well, but my hand swarved"[1] "Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "now have ye mischieved mee." And so the lady departed. And sir Launcelot as well as hee might drew out the arrow, and the head abode still in his buttocke, and so he went weakly unto the hermitage, ever bleeding as hee went. And when sir Lavaine and the hermite espied that sir Launcelot was so hurt, wit yee well they were passing heavie; but sir Lavaine nor the hermite wist not how he was hurt, nor by whom; and then were they wroth out of measure. Then with great paine the hermite gat out the arrow head out of sir Launcelots buttocke, and much of his blood hee shed at that time, and the wound was passing sore and right unhappely smitten, for the wound was in such a place that sir Launcelot might not sit in a saddle. "Ah mercy, Jesu," said sir Launcelot, "I call my selfe the most unhappiest knight that liveth, for ever when I would fainest have worship, there befalleth me ever some unhappie thing. Now so Jesu me helpe," said sir Launcelot, "and if no man would but God, I shall bee in the field upon Candlemasse day at the justs, whatsoever fall of it." So all that might bee gotten to heale sir Launcelot was had. So when the day was come, sir Launcelot let devise that hee was arayed and sir Lavaine and their horses, as though they had beene Sarasins; and so they departed, and came nigh to the field. The king of Northgalis, with an hundred knights with him, and the king of Northumberland also brought with him an hundred good knights; and king Anguish of Ireland brought with him

[1] *Swarved.*—Swerved; made a false move.

an hundred good knights ready to just; and sir Galahalt the haute prince brought with him an hundred good knights; and the king with the hundred knights brought with him as many, and all these were proved knights. And then came in king Arthurs part: and there came in the king of Scotland with an hundred knights; and king Urience of Gore brought with him an hundred good knights; and king Howell of Brittaine brought with him an hundred knights; and king Chalaunce of Clarence brought with him an hundred knights; and king Arthur himselfe came into the field with two hundred knights, and the most part were knights of the table round, which were proved noble knights; and there were old knights set upon scaffolds to judge with the queene who did best.

CHAP. CXXVI.—Of a great justs done at the Christmasse, and of a great justs and turneyment ordained by king Arthur, and of sir Lancelot.

THEN they blew unto the field, and there the king of Northgalis encountred with the king of Scotland, and there the king of Scotland had a fall; and the king of Ireland smot down king Uriens, and the king of Northumberland smot down king Howell of Brittaine, and sir Galahalt the haut prince smote downe king Chalaunce of Claraunce. And then king Arthur was wood wroth, and ranne to the king with the hundred knights, and there king Arthur smote him downe, and after with that same speare king Arthur smote downe three other knights; and then when his speare was broken king Arthur did passing well. And so therewithall came sir Gawaine and sir Gaheris, sir Agravaine and sir Mordred, and there everieeach of them smote downe a knight, and sir Gawaine smote downe foure knights. And then there began a full strong meddle, for then there came in the knights of sir Launcelots blood, and sir Gareth and sir Palomides with them, and many knights of the round table.

And they began to hold the foure kings and the mightie duke so hard, that they were discomforted. But this duke sir Galahalt the haute prince was a noble knight, and by his mightie prowesse of armes he held the knights of the round table straight enough. All this doing saw sir Launcelot, and then he came into the field with sir Lavaine as it had beene thunder. And then sir Bors and the knights of his blood espied sir Launcelot, and said unto them all, "I warne you beware of him with the sleeve of gold upon his head, for hee himselfe is sir Launcelot du Lake." And for great goodnesse sir Bors warned sir Gareth. "I am well apaied," said sir Gareth, "that I may know him in the same aray. But who is he," said they all," that rideth with him in the same array?" "That is the good and gentle knight sir Lavaine," said sir Bors. So sir Launcelot encountred with sir Gawaine, and there by force sir Launcelot smote downe sir Gawaine and his horse to the ground; and in likewise hee smote downe sir Agravaine and sir Gaheris, and also hee smote downe sir Mordred, and all this was done with one speare. Then sir Lavaine met with sir Palomides, and either met other so hard and so fiersly, that both their horses fell to the ground, and then they were horsed againe. And then met sir Launcelot with sir Palomides, and there sir Palomides had a fall. So sir Launcelot, or ever hee stinted, as fast as he might get speares, he smote downe thirtie knights, and the most part of them were knights of the round table. And ever the knights of his blood withdrew them, and made them to doe in other places where as sir Launcelot came not. And then king Arthur was wroth, when he saw sir Launcelot doe such deedes. Then the king called unto sir Gawaine, sir Mordred, sir Kay, sir Griflet, sir Lucan the butler, sir Pedivere, sir Palomides, and sir Safire his brother; and so king Arthur with these nine knights made them ready for to set upon sir Launcelot and upon sir Lavaine. All this espied sir Bors de Galis and sir Gareth of Orkeny. "Now I

dread mee sore," said sir Bors, "that my lord sir Launcelot will be hard matched." "By my head," said sir Gareth, "I will ride unto my lord sir Launcelot, for to helpe him, befall of mee what befall may, for hee is the same man that made me knight." "Ye shall not doe so," said sir Bors, "by my counsaile, unles that ye were disguised." "Ye shall see me disguised," said sir Gareth, "and that anon." And therewith he espied a Welsh knight where he was to rest himselfe, and hee was sore hurt before by sir Gawaine, and to him sir Gareth rode, and prayed him of his knighthood for to lend him his shield for his. "I will well," said the Welsh knight. And when sir Gareth had his shield, it was greene with a maiden that seemed in it. Then sir Gareth came driving as fast as he might unto sir Launcelot, and said thus unto him, "Sir knight, keepe thy selfe, for yonder cometh king Arthur with nine noble knights with him, to put you to rebuke, and so am I come to beare you fellowship for old love yee have shewed me." "Gramercie," said sir Launcelot. "Sir," said sir Gareth, "encounter yee with sir Gawaine, and I shall encounter with sir Palomides, and let sir Lavaine match with king Arthur; and when wee have delivered them let us three hold us sadly[1] together." Then came king Arthur with his nine knights with him, and sir Launcelot encountred with sir Gawaine, and gave him such a buffet that the arson of his saddle broke, and sir Gawaine fell to the earth. Then sir Gareth encountred with the good knight sir Palomides, and he gave him such a buffet that both his horse and hee dashed to the earth. Then encountred king Arthur with sir Lavaine, and there either of them smote other to the earth horse and all, that they lay a great while.

Then sir Launcelot smote downe sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, and sir Mordred. And then sir Gareth smote downe sir Kay, sir Safire, and sir Griflet. And then sir Lavaine was horsed againe, and hee smote downe sir Lucas the butler

[1] *Sadly.*—Steadily; discreetly.

and sir Bedivere. And then there began a great throng of good knights. Then sir Launcelot hurled and pulled off helmes, so that at that time there might none sit him a buffet with his speare nor with his sword. And sir Gareth did such deds of armes, that all men mervailed what knight hee was with the greene shield, for hee smote downe that day and pulled downe more then thirtie knights. And sir Launcelot mervailed greatly when hee beheld sir Gareth doe such deedes, what knight hee might bee; and sir Lavaine pulled downe and smote downe tweentie knights. Also sir Launcelot knew not sir Gareth, for and sir Tristram de Liones or sir Lamorake de Galis had beene alive, sir Launcelot would have deemed that hee had beene one of them twaine.

So ever as sir Launcelot, sir Gareth, and sir Lavaine fought, and on the other side sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, sir Lionell, sir Bleoberis, and sir Galahud, sir Galihodin, sir Pelleas, with moe other of king Bans blood fought on another part, and held the king with the hundred knights and also the king of Northumberland right straight and right hardy.

CHAP. CXXVII.—How king Arthur mervailed him much of the justing and turneyment in the field, and how he rode and found sir Lancelot.

SO this justing and this turneyment endured long, til it was almost night; for the knights of the round table releeved[1] ever unto king Arthur, for the king was wroth out of measure, that hee and his knights might not prevaile that day. Then sir Gawaine said unto king Arthur, "I mervaile where all this day sir Bors de Galis and his fellowship of sir Launcelots blood be; I mervaile me all this day greatly that they bee not about you. It is for some cause," said sir Gawaine.

[1] *Releeved.*—Rallied.

"By my head," said sir Kay, "sir Bors is yonder all this day upon the right hand of the field, and there hee and his blood done more worshipfullier then we doe." "It may well be," said sir Gawaine, "but I dread me alway of guile, for upon paine of my life," said sir Gawaine, "this knight with the red sleeve of gold is sir Launcelot himselfe, I see wel by his riding and by his great strookes giving; and the other knight in the same colour is the good young knight sir Lavaine; also, that knight with the greene shield is my brother sir Gareth, and yet hee hath disguised himselfe, for no man can make him to be against sir Launcelot, because he made him knight." "By my head," said king Arthur, "nephew, I beleeve you, therefore tell me now what is your best counsaile." "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "yee shall have my best counsaile. Let blow unto lodging, for and if hee be sir Launcelot, and my brother sir Gareth with him, with the helpe of that good young knight sir Lavaine, trust mee truely it will be no boote to strive with them. but if we should fall ten or twelve upon one knight, and that were no worship, but shame." "Yee say truth," said the king. "And for to say sooth," said the king, "it were shame to us, so many as wee bee, to set upon them any more. For wit yee well," said king Arthur, "they be three good knights, and namely that knight with the red sleeve of gold." So then they blew unto lodging. But foorthwithall king Arthur let send unto the foure kings and unto the mighty duke, and prayed them that the knight with the sleeve of cloth of gold depart not from them, but that the king may speake with him. Then foorthwithall king Arthur alighted and unarmed him, and gat him a little hackney,[1] and rode after sir Launcelot, for ever hee had an eye upon him. And so they found him among the foure kings and the duke, and there king Arthur praied them all unto supper, and they answered with a good will. And so when they were all

[1] *Hackney.*—The hackney was a small and less spirited horse, on which ladies rode, and knights when they were not in their armour.

unarmed, king Arthur knew sir Launcelot, sir Lavaine, and sir Gareth. "Ah! sir Launcelot," said king Arthur, "this day yee have heated me and my knights." So they went unto king Arthurs lodging all together. And there was a great feast and great revell, and the prise was given unto sir Launcelot; and by herawlds they named him that hee had smitten downe fiftie knights, and sir Gareth thirtie five, and sir Lavaine twentie foure knights. Then sir Launcelot told the king and the queene how the lady huntresse shoote him in the forrest of Windsore in the buttocke with a broad arrow, and how the wound thereof was that time six enches deepe and also in like long. And king Arthur blamed sir Gareth, because he left his fellowship and held with sir Launcelot. "My lord," said sir Gareth, "hee made mee a knight, and when I saw him so hard bestead, mee thought it was my worship to helpe him, because I saw him doe so much, and so many noble knights against him. And when I understood that hee was sir Launcelot du Lake, I shamed me to see so many knights against him alone." "Truely," said king Arthur unto sir Gareth, "yee say well, and worshipfully have yee done, and to your selfe great worship; and all the dayes of my life," said king Arthur unto sir Gareth, "wit ye well I shall love you and trust you the better. For ever," said king Arthur, "it is a worshipfull knights deede for to helpe another worshipfull knight, when hee seeth him in great danger; for ever a worshipfull man will bee loth to see a worshipfull man shamed. And he that is of no worship and fareth with cowardise, never shall hee shew gentlenesse, nor no manner of goodnesse, where as hee seeth a man in any danger; for then ever a coward will shew no mercy. And alwayes a good knight will doe ever to another knight as hee would be done to himselfe." So then ther were made great feasts to kings and dukes; and revell, game, and play, and all manner of noblenesse was used. And hee that was curteous, true, and faithfull unto his friend, was that time cherished.

CHAP. CXXVIII.—How true love is likned unto summer.

ND thus it passed on from Candelmasse untill after Easter, that the moneth of May was come, when every lusty heart beginneth to blossome and to bring foorth fruit; for like as herbes and trees bring foorth fruit and flourish in May, in likewise every lusty heart, that is in any manner a lover, springeth and flourisheth in lusty deeds. For it giveth unto all lovers courage that lusty moneth of May in some thing, for to constraine him to some manner of thing, more in that moneth then in any other moneth, for divers causes; for then all herbs and trees renew a man and woman. And in likewise lovers call againe to their mind old gentlenesse and old service, and many kind deeds that were forgotten by negligence; for like as winter rasure[1] doth alway rase and deface greene summer, so fareth it by unstable love in a man and in woman, for in many persons there is no stabilitie. For wee may see all day a little blast of winters rasure, anon wee shall deface and put away true love for little or naught that cost much thing; this is no wisdome nor stabilitie, but it is feeblenesse of nature and great disworship whosoever useth this. Therefore like as May moneth floureth and flourisheth in many gardens, so in likewise let every man of worship flourish his hart in this world, first unto God, and next unto the joy of them that he promiseth his faith unto. For there was never worshipfull woman, but they loved one better than another. And worship in armes may never be defouled. But first reserve the honour unto God, and secondly the quarell must come of thy lady, and such love I call vertuous love; but now a-dayes men can not love seven night, but they must have all their desires, that love may not endure by reason; for where they be soone accorded, and hasty heat soone cooleth, right so fareth love now a-dayes, soone hot,

[1] *Rasure.*—Erasure of the verdure of the ground.

soone cold; this is no stabilitie. But the old love was not so, men and women cold love together seeven yeares, and no licorus[1] lusts were betweene them; and then was love, truth, and faithfulnesse. And soe in like-wise was love used in king Arthurs days. Wherefore I liken love now a-dayes unto summer and winter; for like as the one is hot and the other cold, so fareth love now a-daies. Therefore all ye that be lovers, call unto your remembrance the moneth of May, like as did queen Guenever, for whom I make here a little mention, that while she lived she was a true lover, and therefore she had a good end.

CHAP. CXXIX.—How queene Guenever rode on maying[2] with certaine knights of the round table clothed all in greene.

OW it befell in the moneth of lusty May that queene Guenever called unto her knights of the round table, and shee gave them warning, that early in the morning shee should ride on maying into woods and fields beside Westminster, "and I warne you that there be none of you but that he be well horsed, and that ye all be clothed in greene, either in silke or in cloth; and I shall bring with mee ten ladies, and every knight shall have a lady behind him, and every knight shall have a squier and too yeomen, and I will that ye all be well horsed." So they made them ready in the freshest manner; and these were the names of the knights: sir Kay, sir Agravaine, sir Brandiles, sir Sagramore, sir Dodinas, sir Ozanna, sir Ladinas, sir Persaunt, sir Ironside, and sir Pelleas. And those ten knights made them ready in the most freshest manner to ride with the queene. So on the morrow they tooke their horses, and rode on maying with the queene in great

[1] *Licorus.*—Voluptuous; letcherous.

[2] *Rode on maying.*—The practice of going a maying was used by all ranks until late in the seventeenth century. We frequently read of the court going a maying under the Tudors and the Stuarts.

joy and delight; and the queene purposed to have beene againe with the king at the furthest by ten of the clocke, and so was her purpose at that time. Then there was a knight the which hight sir Meliagraunce, and hee was sonne unto king Bagdemagus; and this knight had at that time a castle of the gift of king Arthur, within seaven mile of Westminster. And this knight sir Meliagraunce loved passing well queene Guenever, and so hee had done long and many yeares, and he had layen long in a waite for to steale away the queen; but evermore hee forbeare because of sir Launcelot du Lake, for in no wise he would meddle with the queene if sir Launcelot were in her company, or else and he were neere hand her. And that time there was such a custome, that the queene rode never without a great fellowship of men of armes about her; and there were many good knights, and the most part were young men that would have worship. And they were called the queens knights, and never in no battaile, turneyment, or justs, they never beare none of them no manner of knowledge of their owne armes, but plaine white shields, and thereby they were called the queenes knights. And then when it hapned any of them to be of great worship by his noble deeds, then at the next high feast of Pentecost, if there were any slaine or dead, as there was no yeare that failed but some were dead, then was there chosen in their steeds that were dead the most men of worship that were called the queenes knights. And thus they came up all first, or they were renowmed men of worship, both sir Launcelot and all the remnant of them. But this knight sir Meliagrance had full well espied the queene and her purpose, and how sir Launcelot was not with her, and how she had no men of armes with her, but the ten knights al arayed in green for maying. Then hee purveied him twentie men of armes and an hundred archers to destroy the queene and her knights, for he thought that time was the best season to take the queene.

CHAP. CXXX.—How sir Meliagrance tooke queen Guenever and all her knights, which were sore hurt in fighting.

SO as the queene had mayed, and all her knights, all were bedashed[1] with hearbes and floures in the best manner and freshest. Right so came out of a wood sir Meliagrance with eight score men well armed, as they should fight in battaile of arest, and bad the queene and her knights abide, for maugre their heads they should abide. "Traitour knight," said queene Guenever, "what thinkest thou to doe? wilt thou shame thy selfe? bethinke thee how thou art a kings sonne, and knight of the round table, and thou to be about for to dishonour the noble king that made thee knight, thou shamest the high order of knighthood and thy selfe; and me I let thee wit shalt thou never shame, for I had rather cut my throate in twaine rather then thou shouldest dishonour me." "As for all this language," said sir Meliagraunce, "be it as it may; for wit ye well, madame, that I have loved you many yeeres, and never or now could I get you at such a vantage as I doe now, and therefore I will take you as I find you." Then spake the ten knights all with one voice, and said, "Sir Meliagraunce, wit ye well ye are about to jeopard your worship to dishonour, also yee cast for to jeopard our persons, how be it we bee unarmed, yee have us at a great advantage, for it seemeth by you that yee have laid watch on us; but rather then ye should put the queene to shame and us all, wee had as leave to depart from our lives, for and if we otherwise did wee were shamed for ever." Then sir Meliagraunce said, "Dresse you as well as ye can, and keepe the queene." Then the ten knights of the round table drew their swords, and the other let run at them with their speares; and the ten knights manly abode them, and smote away their speares, that no speare did them harme. Then they lashed together with their

[1] *Bedashed.*—Covered and adorned.

swords; and anon sir Kay, sir Griflet,[1] sir Agravaine, sir Dodinas,[2] and sir Ozanna were smitten to the earth with grimly wounds. Then sir Brandiles and sir Persaunt, sir Ironside and sir Pelleas fought long, and they were full sore wounded, for these knights or ever they were laid to the ground slew fortie men of the best of them. So when the queen saw her knights thus dolefully wounded, and needes must be slaine at the last, then for pittie and sorrow she cried and said, "Sir Meliagraunce, sley not my knights, and I will go with thee upon this covenant, that thou save them, and suffer them to bee no more hurt; with this, that they bee led with mee where soever thou leadest mee, for I will rather sley my selfe then I will goe with thee, unlesse that these my noble knights may be in presence." "Madame," said sir Meliagraunce, "for your sake they shall bee led with you into my castle, with that ye wil be ruled and ride with me."

Then queene Guenever prayed the foure knights to leave their fight, and she and they would not depart. "Madame," said sir Pelleas, "we will doe as yee doe, for as for me, I take no force of my life nor death." For sir Pelleas gave such buffets there that no armour might hold them.

CHAP. CXXXI.—How sir Lancelot had word how the queene was taken, and how sir Meliagraunce layed an embushment for sir Launcelot.

THEN by the queenes command they left battaile, and dressed the wounded knights on horsebacke, some sitting and some overthwart, that it was pittie to behold them. And then sir Meliagraunce charged the queene and all her knights that none of her fellowship should depart from her, for full sore he dread sir Launcelot du Lake, least he should have any knowledge. All this espied the queene, and prively

[1] *Sir Griflet.—Sir Sagramor*, Caxton.
[2] *Dodinas.—Ladynas*, Caxton.

shee called unto her a child[1] of her chamber, which was swiftly horsed, to whom shee said, "Goe thou when thou seest thy time, and beare this ring unto sir Launcelot du Lake, and pray him as he loveth me that hee will come and see me, and that hee rescew mee if ever hee will have joy of mee; and spare thou not thy horse," said the queene, "neither for water nor yet for land." And so the child espied his time, and lightly hee mounted upon his horse, and smote him with the spurs, and so departed from them as fast as ever his horse might runne. And when sir Meliagraunce saw the child so flee, hee understood well it was by the queenes commande, for to warne sir Launcelot; then they that were best horsed chased him, and shot at him, but the child went from them all. And then sir Meliagrance said unto queene Guenever, "Madame, yee bee about to betray mee, but I shall ordaine for sir Launcelot that hee shall not lightly come at you." And then hee rode with her and they all to his castle in all the haste that they might; and by the way sir Meliagraunce laid in an ambushment the best archers that he might get in his countrey, to the number of thirty, for to waite upon sir Launcelot, charging them that if they saw such a manner of knight come by the way upon a white horse, in any wise to sley his horse, but in no manner of wise not to have to doe with him bodily, for hee is over hard to bee overcome. So this was done, and they were come to his castle; but in no wise the queene would never let none of the ten knights and her ladies be out of her sight, but alway they were in her presence; for that sir Meliagraunce durst make no masteries[2] for dread of sir Launcelot, in so much as he deemed that he had warning. So when the child was departed from the fellowshippe of sir Meliagraunce, within a while he came to Westminster, and anon he found sir Launcelot; and when hee had told his message and delivered him the queenes ring, "Alas!" said sir Launcelot,

[1] *Child.*—A page. [2] *No masteries.*—Use no compulsion.

"now am I shamed for ever, onles that I may rescew that noble lady from dishonour." Then egerly hee asked his armour; and ever the child tould sir Launcelot how the ten knights fought mervailously, and how sir Pelleas, sir Ironside, sir Brandiles, and sir Persaunt of Inde fought strongly, but namely sir Pelleas, for there was none might withstand him; and how they all fought, till at the last they were laid to the earth; and then the queene made apointment for to save their lives, and went with sir Meliagraunce. "Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "that that most noble lady should bee destroyed; I had rather," said sir Launcelot, "then all the realme of Fraunce that I had beene there well armed." So when sir Launcelot was all armed and upon his horse, hee prayed the child of the queenes chamber for to warne sir Lavaine how sudainely he was departed, and for what cause; "and pray him that as hee loveth me, that hee will hie him fast after me, and that he stint not till that he come to me unto the castle where as sir Meliagraunce abideth or dwelleth; for there," said sir Launcelot, "shall hee heere of me, if I bee a man living, and rescew the queene and the ten knights, the which he full traiterously hath taken, and that shall I prove upon his head, and on all them that holdeth with him."

CHAP. CXXXII.—How sir Launcelots horse was slaine, and how sir Launcelot rode in a chariot for to rescew the queene.

THEN sir Launcelot rode as fast as he might, and he tooke the water at Westminster bridge,[1] and made his horse for to swim over the Thames to Lambeth; and then within a while he came to the place where as the ten knights had fought

[1] *Westminster bridge.*—It is not easy to understand how this strange anachronism can have arisen, for there was no bridge at Westminster until the middle of the eighteenth century. Caxton's text has *at Westmynstre brydge.*

with sir Meliagraunce; and then sir Launcelot followed the trace untill he came unto a wood; and there was a straight way, and therein the thirtie archers bad sir Launcelot to turne againe and follow no longer the trace. "What command have yee thereto," said sir Launcelot, "to cause me that am a knight of the round table to leave my right way?" "This way shalt thou leave, or else thou shalt goe it upon thy feete, for wit thou wel thy horse shall be slaine." "That is little mastery," said sir Launcelot, "for to sley my horse; but as for my selfe, when my horse is slaine, I give right nought for you, not and yee were five hundred more." So then they shot sir Launcelots horse, and smote him with many arrowes; and then sir Launcelot avoided his horse, and went on foote, but there were so many ditches and hedges betweene them and him that he might not meddle with one of them. "Alas! for shame," said sir Launcelot, "that ever one knight should betray an other knight; but it is an old saying, 'A good man is never in danger, but when he is in danger of a coward.'" Then sir Launcelot went a while on foote, and then was he foule combred with his armour, shield and speare, and all that belonged to him; wit ye well he was full sore anoyed, and full loth he was to leave any thing that belonged unto him, for hee dread right sore the treason of sir Meliagraunce; and then by fortune there came by a chariot,[1] the which came thither for to fetch wood. "Tell mee, carter," said sir Launcelot, "what I shall give thee for to suffer me to leape into the chariot, and that thou bring mee unto a castle within these two miles." "Thou shalt not come within my chariot," said the carter, "for I am sent for to fetch wood for my lord sir Meliagraunce."

[1] *Chariot.*—A cart. The cart was used for conveying criminals to the gallows, and it was hence considered disgraceful for a gentleman to be seen in it. This explains why, when Launcelot approached the castle, one of the ladies supposed he was riding "to hanging." It may be remarked that this incident in the history of Launcelot was made the subject of a separate poem by Chrestiens de Troyes, a trouvère of the thirteenth century, under the title of the *Roman de la Charette.*

"With him would I faine speake," said sir Launcelot. "Thou shalt not goe with mee," said the carter. Then sir Launcelot lept to him, and gave him such a buffet, that hee fell to the ground stark dead. Then the other carter, his fellow, was afeard, and thought to have gone the same way; and then he cried and said, "Faire lord, save my life, and I shall bring you where you will." "Then I charge thee," said sir Launcelot, "that thou drive mee and this chariot even unto sir Meliagraunce castle." "Leape up into the chariot," said the carter, "and ye shall bee there anon." So the carter drove forth as fast as hee could; and sir Launcelots horse followed the chariot with more then fortie arrowes broad and rough in him. And more then an houre and a halfe queene Guenever was in a bay window waiting with her ladies, and espied an armed knight standing in a chariot. "See, madame," said a lady, "where as rideth in a chariot a goodly armed knight, I suppose that he rideth to hanging." "Where?" said the queene. And then the queene espied by his shield that hee was there himselfe sir Launcelot du Lake; and then she was ware where came his horse after that chariot, and ever hee trode his guts and his paunch under his feete. "Alas!" said the queene, "now I see well and prove that well is him that hath a trusty friend. Ah, most noble knight," said queene Guenever, "I see well that thou hast beene hard besteed when thou ridest in a cart." Then shee rebuked that lady that likned him to ride in a chariot to hanging. "It was foule mouthed," said the queene, "and evill likned, so for to liken the most noble knight of the world in such a shamefull death. Oh Jesu defend him and keepe him," said the queene, "from all mischievous end." By this was sir Launcelot come unto the gate of the castle, and he descended downe, and cried, that all the castle rang of it, "Where art thou, false traitour, sir Meliagraunce, and knight of the round table? now com forth here, thou false traitour knight, thou and thy fellowship with thee; for here I am sir Launcelot du Lake, I shal

fight with thee." And therwithall he beare the gate wide open upon the porter, and smot him under his eare with his gauntlet, that his necke brake in sunder.

CHAP. CXXXIII.—How sir Meliagraunce required forgivenesse of queene Guenever, and how she appeased sir Lancelot, and of other matters.

SO when sir Meliagraunce heard that sir Launcelot was come, hee ran to the queene and fell upon his knees, and said, "Mercy, madame, now I put mee wholy in your grace." "What ayleth you now?" said queene Guenever; "for sooth yee might well wit that some good knight would revenge mee, though my lord king Arthur wist not of this your work." "Madame," said sir Meliagraunce, "all this that is done amisse on my part shall bee amended right as your selfe will devise, and wholy I put mee in your grace." "What would yee that I did?" said the queene. "I would no more," said sir Meliagraunce, "but that yee would take into your owne hands, and that yee will rule my lord sir Launcelot; and such cheere as may bee made him in this poore castle, yee and hee shall have untill to morrow, and then may yee and all your knights and ladies returne to Westminster. And my body and all that I have shal I put into your rule." "Yee say well," said the queene, "and better is peace then alway warre; and the lesse strife is made, the moore is my worship." Then the queene and her ladies went downe unto the knight sir Launcelot, which stood wroth out of measure in the inner court for to abide battaile; and ever hee said, "Thou traitour knight, come foorth here." Then the queene came unto him, and said, "Sir Launcelot, why be ye so moved?" "Ha, madame," said sir Launcelot, "wherfore aske yee me that question? Mee seemeth," said sir Launcelot, "yee ought to be more displeased then I am, for yee have the hurt and the dishon-

our; for wit yee well, madame, my hurt is but litle for the killing of a maires sonne, but the despite greveth mee much more then all my hurt." "Truly," said queene Guenever, "yee say truth; but heartely I thanke you," said the queene, "but yee must come in with mee peaceably, for al things is put in my hands, and all that is evill shall be for the best; for the knight full sore repenteth him for the misadventure that is befallen him." "Madame," said sir Launcelot, "sith it is so that yee are accorded with him, as for mee I may not bee against it, how be it sir Meliagraunce hath done full shamefully to mee and full cowardly; madame," said sir Lancelot, "if I had wist that ye would have been so soone accorded with him, I would not have made such haste to you." "Why say you so?" said the queene; "do ye forethinke your selfe of your good deedes? Wit yee well," said the queene, "I accorded never unto him for favour nor love that I have unto him, but for to lay downe every shamefull noyse." "Madame," said sir Launcelot, "yee understand full well that I was never willing nor glad of shamefull slaunder nor noise, and there is neither king, queene, nor knight that beareth life, except my lord king Arthur and you, madame, that should let mee, but that I should make sir Meliagraunce heart full cold or I depart from hence." "That wot I well," said the queene; "but what will ye more? yee shall have all things ruled as ye like to have it." "Madame," said sir Launcelot, "so that ye be pleased I care not, as for my part ye shall ful soone please." Right so the queene tooke sir Launcelot by the bare hand, for hee had put off his gauntlet, and so shee went with him to her chamber; and then she commanded him to bee unarmed. And then sir Launcelot asked where the ten knights were that were sore wounded. So she shewed them unto sir Launcelot; and there they made great joy of his comming, and sir Launcelot made great dole for their hurts, and bewailed them greatly; and there sir Launcelot told them how cowardly

and traiterously sir Meliagraunce had set archers to sley his horse, and how he was faine to put himselfe in a chariot. Thus they complained the one unto the other, and full faine they would have beene revenged, but they appeased themselves because of the queene. Then sir Launcelot was called many a day after Le chevalier du chariot, and did many deedes, and great adventures he had.

And so leave we off this tale Le chevalier du chariot, and returne wee unto our tale. So sir Launcelot had great cheere with the queene; and then sir Launcelot made a promise with the queene, that the same night hee should come into a window outward to a garden, and that window was bared with iron; and there sir Launcelot promised for to meete her when all folkes were asleepe. So then came sir Lavaine driving to the gate, crying, "Where is my lord sir Launcelot du Lake?" Then was he foorthwith sent for; and when sir Lavaine saw sir Launcelot, he said, "My lord, I found well how yee were hard besteed, for I have found your horse, the which was slaine with arowes." "As for that," said sir Launcelot, "I pray you, sir Lavaine, speake yee of other matters, and let this passe, and wee shall right it another time, when wee best may."

CHAP. CXXXIV.—How sir Lancelot came in the night to the queene, and lay with her, and how sir Meliagraunce appeached the queene of treason.

THEN the knights that were wounded were searched, and soft salves were laid to there wounds, and so it passed on till supper time; and all the cheere that might bee made them, there it was shewed unto the queene and her knights. Then, when season was, they went to their chambers; but in no wise the queene would not suffer the wounded knights to bee from her, but that they were laide within draughts upon beds and pillowes, that shee her selfe might see to them,

that they lacked nothing. So when sir Launcelot was in his chamber that was assigned unto him, hee called unto him sir Lavaine, and told him that that night hee must goe speake with his lady dame Guenever. "Sir," said sir Lavaine, "let me go with you and it please you, for I dread me sore of the treason of sir Meliagraunce." "Nay," said sir Launcelot, "I thanke you, I will have no person with me at this time." And then sir Launcelot tooke his sword in his hand, and prively went unto a place where as he had espied a ladder before hand, and that hee tooke under his arme, and beare it through the garden, and set it up in a window; and there anon the queene was ready to meet him. And then they made either to other their complaints of divers things; and then sir Launcelot wished that he might come in unto her. "Wit yee well," said the queene, "I would as faine as ye that yee might come into me." "Would yee, madame," said sir Launcelot, "with your heart that I were with you?" "Yea, truly," said the queen. "Now shal I prove my might," said sir Lancelot, "for the love of you." And then hee set his hand upon the barres of iron, and pulled at them with such a great might that hee brake them cleane out of the stone wals; and therewithall one of the barres of iron cut the brawne[1] of sir Launcelots hand throughout to the bone. And then he lept into the chamber to the queene. "Make yee no noyse," said the queene, "for my wounded knights lie here fast by me." And so to passe forth upon this tale, sir Launcelot went to bed with the queene, and so he tooke no force of his hurt hand, but tooke his pleasance and his liking untill it was in the dawning of the day, and wit yee well hee slept not, but watched. And when hee saw the time that hee might tary no longer, hee tooke his leave, and departed at the window, and put it together againe as well as he might, and so departed, and came to his owne chamber; and there he told sir Lavaine how hee

[1] *Brawne.*—The fleshy part.

was hurt. Then sir Lavaine dressed his hand, and staunched it, and put upon it a glove, that it should not bee espied. And so the queene lay long in her bed, untill it was nine of the clocke. Then sir Meliagraunce went to the queenes chamber, and found her ladies there ready clothed. "Jesu, mercy," said sir Meliagraunce, "what ayleth you, madame, that yee sleepe thus long?" And so foorth withall he opened the curtaines for to behold her; and then was he ware where shee lay, and all the shete and pilow was all bebled with the blood of sir Launcelots hurt hand. And when sir Meliagraunce espied that blood, then hee deemed in himselfe that she was false unto the king, and that some of the wounded knights had laine by her all that night. "Ah, madame," said sir Meliagraunce, "now I have found you a false traitresse unto my lord king Arthur, for now I prove it well that it was not for nought that yee laide these wounded knights within the bounds of your chamber; therefore I will accuse you of treason before my liege lord king Arthur. And now I have proved you, madame, with a shameful deed, and that they be all false, or some of them, that I will make good, for a wounded knight this night hath lien by you." "That is false," said the queene, "and that I report me to them all." Then when the ten knights heard sir Meliagraunce words, they spake al with one voice, and said to sir Meliagraunce, "Thou saist falsely, and wrongfully puttest upon us such a deede, and that wee will make good any of us; choose which thou list of us, when we are whole of our wounds." "Ye shall not," said sir Meliagraunce; "away with proud language! for here ye may all see," said sir Meliagraunce, "that by the queene this night a wounded knight hath layne." Then were they all ashamed when they saw that blood. And wit yee well that sir Meliagraunce was passing glad that hee had the queene at such avantage, for hee deemed that should hide his treason. So in this rumour came in sir Launcelot, and found them all at a great aray.

CHAP. CXXXV.—How sir Launcelot answered for the queene, and waged battaile against sir Meliagraunce; and how sir Launcelot was taken in a trap.

ha! what aray is this?" said sir Launcelot. Then sir Meliagraunce told him what hee had found, and shewed him the queenes bed. "Truely," said sir Launcelot, "yee did not your part nor knightly to touch a queenes bed the whiles it was drawen, and she lying therein; for I dare say and make good, that my lord king Arthur himselfe would not have desplaied her curtains, shee being within her bed, unlesse that it had pleased him to have lien downe by her. And therefore have yee done unworshipfully and shamefully to your selfe." "I wote not what you meane," said sir Meliagraunce; "but well I am sure there hath one of her wounded knights lyen by her this night, and therefore I will prove it with my hands that she is a traitresse unto my lord king Arthur." "Beware what ye do," said sir Launcelot, "for and ye say so and that ye will prove it, it shall be taken at your hands." "My lord sir Launcelot," said sir Meliagraunce, "be you beware also what yee do, for though ye are never so good a knight, as yee wote well that yee are renowmed the best knight of the world, yet should ye be advised to doe battaile in a wrong quarrell; for God will have a strooke in every battaile that is done." "As for that," said sir Launcelot, "God is to bee dread. But as unto that I say nay plainely, that this night there lay none of these ten wounded knights with my lady queene Guenever, and that will I prove with my hands that yee say untruely in that." "Now hold," said sir Meliagraunce, "here is my glove, that shee is a traitresse unto my lord king Arthur, and that this night one of the wounded knights lay with her." "And I receive your glove," said sir Launcelot. And so they were sealed with their signets, and delivered to the ten knights. "Upon what day shall we do

battaile together?" said sir Launcelot. "This day eight daies," said sir Meliagraunce, "in the field besid Westminster." "I am agreed," said sir Launcelot. "But now," said sir Meliagraunce, "sith it is that wee must do battail together, I beseech you as ye are a noble knight awaite me with no treason, nor no vilanie in the meane while, nor none for you." "So God me helpe," said sir Launcelot, "yee shall right wel wit I was never of those conditions, for I report me unto all knights that ever knew me, I used never no treason, nor I loved never to bee in the fellowship of no man that used treason." "Then let us go to dinner," said sir Meliagraunce; "and after dinner yee and the queene and ye all may ride unto Westminster." "I wil wel," said sir Lancelot. And then sir Meliagraunce said unto sir Launcelot, "Pleaseth it you to se the fetures[1] of this castle?" "With a good will," said sir Launcelot. And then they went together from chamber to chamber, for sir Launcelot dread no perils. For ever a man of worship and of prowesse dreadeth alwaie perils least, for they wene that every man is as they bee; but alwaies he that deleth with treason puteth a man oft in great daunger. So it befell upon sir Launcelot that no perill dread. And as he went with sir Meliagraunce, he troade on a trap, and the board rolled, and therewith sir Lancelot fell downe more then ten fadome into a cave upon straw. And then sir Meliagraunce departed, and made semblaunt as though he had not wist where he was. And when sir Lancelot was thus missed, they mervailed where he was become. And then queen Guenever and many of them deemed that he was departed as he was wont to do sodeinly; for sir Meliagraunce made sodainly to put out of the way sir Lavaines horse, that they might all understand that sir Launcelot was departed sodainly. So it past forth untill after dinner; and then sir Lavaine would not stint untill that he had

[1] *Fetures.—Eftures,* Caxton; a mere misprint. It should be *estures,* or *estres,* i. e. the inward part of a building. The printer of the edition of 1634 did not understand it, and turned it to *fetures* (features).

ordained horse litters for the wounded knights that they might be laide in them; and so with the queene and them all, both ladies and gentlewomen and many other, went to Westminster. And the knights told unto king Arthur how sir Meliagraunce had appealed the queen of high treason, and how sir Launcelot had received the glove of him, "and this day eight dayes they shall doe battaile together afore you." "By my head," said king Arthur, "I am afraid that sir Meliagraunce hath taken upon him a great charge. But where is sir Launcelot?" said the king. "Sir," said they all, "we wit not where he is, but we deeme hee is ridden to some adventures, as hee is oftentimes wont to doe, for hee hath sir Lavaines horse." "Let him be," said the king, "hee will bee found, but if hee be trapped with some treason."

CHAP. CXXXVI.—How sir Launcelot was delivered out of prison by a lady, and how he tooke a white courser, and came for to keepe his day.

NOW returne wee unto sir Launcelot lying within that cave in full great paine; and every day there came a lady and brought him his meat and his drinke, and wooed him to have layen by her; and ever the noble knight sir Launcelot said her nay. "Sir Launcelot," said shee, "yee are not wise, for yee may never come out of this prison but if yee have my helpe, and also your lady queene Guenever shal be burnt in your default, unlesse that you bee there at the day of battaile." "God defend it," said sir Launcelot, "that she should be burnt in my default: and if that it bee so," said sir Launcelot, "that I may not bee there, it shall be well understood of both the king and of the queene, and with al men of worship, that I am dead or sick or else in prison; for all men that know me will say for me that I am in some evill case, if I be not there that day. And well I wote there is some good knight, either of my blood, or else some other that loveth me, that will take my quarell in hand. And

therefore," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye well that yee shall not feare me; and if there were no more women in this land but you, I would not have to doe with you." "Then art thou shamed," said the lady, "and distroied for ever." "As for worlds shame," said sir Launcelot, "Jesu defend me, and as for my destresse, it is welcome what so ever it be that God sendeth me." So she came unto sir Launcelot that same day that the battaile should bee, and said to him, "Sir Launcelot, me thinketh yee are too strong hearted, but wouldest thou kisse me once, I would deliver thee and thine armour and the best horse that is within sir Meliagraunce stable." "As for to kisse you," said sir Launcelot, "I may do that and leese no worship, and wit you well, and I understand there were any disworship for to kisse you, I would not doe it." Then hee kissed her, and then she gate him and brought him to his armour. And when hee was armed, she brought him to a stable, where as stood twelve good coursers, and bad him choose the best. Then sir Launcelot looked upon a white courser which liked him best; and anon hee commanded the keeper fast to sadle him with the best sadle of warre that was there; and so it was done as hee commanded. Then gat hee his speare in his hand, and his sword by his side, and commended the lady to God, and said, "Lady, for this good deed I shall doe you service if ever it bee in my power."

CHAP. CXXXVII.—How sir Launcelot came the same time that sir Meliagraunce abode him in the field, and dressed him to battaile.

NOW leave we sir Launcelot galloping all that he might, and speake we of queene Guenever that was brought to a fier to have beene burnt; for sir Meliagraunce was sure him thought that sir Launcelot should not be at that battaile; and therfore he ever cried upon king Arthur for to do him justice, or else for to bring forth sir Launcelot. Then was the

king and al the court full sore abashed and shamed that the queene should bee burnt in the default of sir Lancelot. "My good lord king Arthur," said sir Lavaine, "ye may right well understand that it is not wel with my lord sir Lancelot, for and he were alive, so that he be not sick or in prison, wit ye wel that he would be here, for never heard ye that ever he failed his part for whom he should do battaile for; and therefore now," said sir Lavaine, "my lord king Arthur, I beseech you give me licence to doe battaile here this day for my lord and master, and for to save my lady the queene." "Gramercy, gentle knight sir Lavaine," said king Arthur, "for I dare say that that sir Meliagraunce putteth upon my lady queene Guenever is wrong; for I have spoken with all the ten wounded knights, and there is not one of them, and he were whole and able to doe battaile, but that hee would prove upon sir Meliagraunce body that it is false that hee putteth upon the queene." "So shall I," said sir Lavaine, "in defending of my lord sir Launcelot, and yee will give mee leave." "Now I give you leave," said king Arthur, "and doe your best, for I dare well say there is some treason done to sir Launcelot." Then was sir Lavaine armed and horsed, and suddenly at the lists end hee rode to performe this battaile. And right as the heralds should crie "Lesses les aller," right so came in sir Launcelot driving with all the force of his horse. And so king Arthur cried, "Ho! and abide." Then was sir Launcelot called before king Arthur on horsebacke, and there hee told openly before the king and all them that were present how sir Meliagraunce had served him first and last. And when the king and the queene and all the lordes knew of the treason of sir Meliagraunce, they were all ashamed on his behalfe. And then was queene Guenever sent for, and set by the king in great trust of her champion. And so then ther was no more to say, but sir Launcelot and sir Meliagraunce dressed them unto battaile, and tooke their speares, and so they came together as thunder; and there sir Laun-

celot beare him downe quite over his horse croupe. And then sir Launcelot alighted, and dressed his shield on his shoulder with his sword in his hand; and sir Meliagraunce in the same wise dressed him unto sir Launcelot, and there they smote many strookes together. And at the last sir Launcelot smote him such a buffet upon the helme that hee fell on the one side to the ground; and then he cried upon him aloude, "Most noble knight sir Launcelot du Lake, I pray you save my life, for I yeeld mee unto you, and I beseech you, as ye be a knight and fellow of the round table, sley mee not; for I yeeld me as an over-come knight, and whether I shall live or die I put me in the kings hands and yours." Then sir Launcelot wist not what to doe, for hee had rather then all the good of the world hee might have beene revenged upon sir Meliagraunce. And then sir Launcelot looked toward queene Guenever, if hee might espie by any signe or countenance what hee should have done. And then the queene waged her head upon sir Launcelot, as though shee should say, "Sley him." Full well knew sir Launcelot by the waging of her head that shee would have had him dead. Then sir Launcelot bad him arise for shame and performe that battaile to the uttermost. "Nay," said sir Meliagraunce, "I will never arise untill that yee take mee as yelden and recreant." "I shall proffer you large proffers," said sir Launcelot; "that is to say, I shall unarme my head and the left quarter of my body all that may bee unarmed, and I shall let bind my left hand behind me, so that it shall not helpe mee, and right so I shall doe battaile with you." When sir Meliagraunce heard that, hee start upon his legges, and said on high, "My lord king Arthur, take heede to this proffer, for I will take it, and let him bee disarmed and bound according unto his proffer." "What say yee," said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, "will ye abid by your proffer?" "Ye, my lord," said sir Launcelot, "I will never goe from that I have once said." Then the knights

parters of the field disarmed sir Launcelot, first his head, and after his left arme and his left side; and then they bound his left arme behinde his backe without shield or anything; and then were they put together. Wit yee well there was many a lady and knight mervailed that sir Launcelot would jeopard himselfe in such wise. Then sir Meliagraunce came with his sword all on high, and sir Lancelot shewed him openly his bare head and the bare left side; and when he wend to have smitten him upon the head, then lightly he avoided the left leg and the left side, and put his right hand and his sword to that strooke, and so put it aside with great sleight. Then with great force sir Lancelot smot him upon the helmet such a buffet, that the strooke karved the head in two parts. Then there was no more to doe, but hee was drawen out of the field; and at the instance of the knights of the round table, the king suffered him to be buried, and the mention[1] made upon him, and for what cause hee was slaine. And then the king and the queene made much of sir Launcelot, and more he was cherished then ever he was before.

CHAP. CXXXVIII.—How sir Urre came unto king Arthurs court for to bee healed of his wounds, and how king Arthur would begin to handle him.

THEN ther was a good knight in the land of Hungary, whose name was sir Urre, and he was an adventurous knight; and in all places where hee might heare of any deedes of worship, there would hee be. So it hapned in Spaine there was an earles sonne, the which hight Alphegus, and at a great turnement in Spaine this sir Urre, knight of Hungary, and sir Alphegus of Spaine, encountred together for very envy, and so either undertooke other to the uttermost; and by fortune sir Urre slew sir Alphegus the earles sonne of Spaine. But this knight that was slaine had given sir

[1] *Mention.*—The commemorative inscription; see before, vol. i. 89.

Urre or ever hee was slaine seven great wounds, three on the head, and foure on the body and upon his left hand. And this sir Alphegus had a mother which was a great sorceresse, and shee, for the despite of her sonnes death, wrought by her subtile crafts that sir Urre should never be whole, but ever his wounds should on time fester and another time bleed, so that he should never be whole til that the best knight of the world had serched his wounds; and in this manner shee made her vaunt, wherethrough it was knowen that sir Urre should never bee whole. Then sir Urrs mother let make an horse-litter, and put him therein under two palfreis; and then shee tooke sir Urrs sister with him, which was a full faire damosell, whose name was Feloly, and then she tooke a page with her to keepe their horses. And so they led sir Urre through many countries; for she led him so seven yeares through all lands Christian, and never she could find no knight that might ease her sonne. So at the last she came into Scotland and into the bounds of England, and at the feast of Pentecost at king Arthurs court that at that time was holden at Caerleill. And when she came there, then she made it openly to bee knowen how shee was come into that countrey for to have her sonne healed. Then king Arthur let call the lady, and asked her the cause why shee had brought that hurt knight into that countrey. "My most noble lord king Arthur," said that lady, "wit ye well I brought him hether for to bee healed of his wounds, the which of all these seven yeares might not bee healed." And then shee told the king where hee was wounded and of whom, and how his[1] mother had discovered in her pride how shee had wrought that by enchauntment, so that hee should never bee whole unto the time that the best knight of the world had searched his wounds. "And so I have passed through all the lands Christen for to have him healed, except this land, and if that I faile to heale him here in this countrey, I will never

[1] *His*, here refers to the previous relative *whom*.

take more paine upon me; and that is pitie, for hee was a full good knight, and of great noblenesse." "What is his name?" said king Arthur. "My good and gracious lord," said shee, "his name is sir Urre of the mount." "In good time," said king Arthur; "and sith yee are come hither into this countrey, ye are welcome. And wit ye well that here shall your sonne be healed, and if any christian man may heale him; and for to give all other men of worship courage, I myselfe will assay to handle your sonne, and so shall all the kings, dukes, and earles that be heere present with me at this time; and thereto I will commande them; and well I wote they shall obey and doe after my commande. And wit yee well," said king Arthur unto sir Urres sister, "I shall begin to handle him and search him unto my power, not presuming upon me that I am so worthy to heale your brother by my deeds, but I will encourage other men of worship to doe as I will doe." And then the king commanded all the kings, dukes, and earles, and al the noble knights of the round table that were there that time present, to come into the medow of Caerleil. And so at that time there were but an hundred and ten knights of the round table, for forty knights were away. And so here we must begin at king Arthur, as is kindly to begin at him that was the most man of worship that was christened at that time.

CHAP. CXXXIX.—How king Arthur handled sir Urre, and after him many other knights of the round table.

THEN king Arthur looked upon sir Urre, and thought in himselfe that hee had beene a full likly man when hee was whole. And then king Arthur made him to be taken out of the litter, and laid him upon the ground, and there was laid a cushin of cloth of gold that he should kneele upon. And then king Arthur said, "Faire knight, me repenteth of thy hurt, and to encourage all other noble knights, I will pray thee for

to suffer mee softly to handle thy wounds." "Most noble christen king," said sir Urre, "do as it shal please you, for I am here at the mercy of God and at your commande." So then king Arthur softly handled him, and then some of his wounds renewed on bleeding. Then after king Arthur, king Claraunce of Northumberland searched, and it would not be; and then sir Barraunt le Apres, that was called the king with the hundred knights, he assaied and failed; and so did king Uriens of the land of Gore; so did king Anguish of Ireland; so did king Nentres of Garloth; so did king Carados of Scotland; so did the duke Galahalt the haut prince; so did Constantine, that was king Carados sonne of Cornewaile; so did duke Chalaunce of Claraunce; so did the earle Ulbause; so did the earle Lambaile; so did the earle Aristause. Then came in sir Gawaine with his three sonnes, sir Gingaine,[1] sir Florence, and sir Lovell; these three were begotten upon sir Brandiles sister, and sir Gawaine and his sonnes failed. Then came in sir Agravaine, sir Gaheris, sir Mordred, and the good knight sir Gareth, which was of very knighthood worth all the brethren; so there came knights of sir Launcelots kinne, but sir Launcelot was not that time in the court, for hee was that time on his adventures. Then sir Lionell, sir Ector de Maris, sir Bors de Ganis, sir Blamor de Ganis, sir Bleoberis de Ganis, sir Galhalantin, sir Galihodin, sir Manadiuke, sir Villiars le Valiaunt, sir Hebes le Renowme, all these knights were of sir Launcelots kinne, and they failed everyeach one. Then came in sir Sagramore le Desirous, sir Dodinas le Savage, sir Dinadan, sir Brunor le Noire, which sir Kay called La-cote-male-taile, and sir Kay the seneshall, sir Kay de Straungis, sir Meliot de Logris, and sir Petipace of Winchelsee, sir Galleron of Galway, sir Melion of the mountaine, sir Sadocke, sir Uwaine les Avoutres, and sir Ozanna le Cuer hardy. Then there came in sir Astamore, and sir Gromore, sir Grummors sonne, sir Crosselme, sir Servause le Breuse, which was at that time called one of the

[1] *Gingaine.—Sir Gyngalyn*, Caxton.

strongest knights of the world, for the chiefe lady of the lake feasted this sir Servause le Breuse and sir Launcelot du Lake. And so when shee had feasted them both at sundry times, shee praied them to graunt her a boone, and they graunted to her. And then shee praied sir Servause le Breuse that he would promise her never to doe battaile against sir Launcelot du Lake, and in the same manner of wise shee praied sir Launcelot du Lake never to doe battaile against sir Servause le Breuse; and so either of them promised unto other. That sir Servause had never no lust nor courage to do battaile against no man, but if it were against giaunts and against dragons, and such other wild beasts. So wee passe unto them which at the kings request made them all that were there at that high feast, as of all the knights of the round table, for to search sir Urre. To that entent the king did it, for to know which was the noblest knight among them all. Then there came in sir Agravaile,[1] sir Durnar, and sir Tor, the which was begotten upon Aries the cowheards wife, but this sir Tor was begotten before Aries the cowheard had wedded her, and king Pellinore begate all these knights, first sir Tor, sir Agravaile, sir Durnore, sir Lamoracke, which was one of the most noble knights that ever was in king Arthurs daies, as for a worldly knight, and sir Percivale that was peerelesse, except sir Galahad, in holy deeds, but they died in the quest of the sanegreall. Then came in sir Griflet le fise de Dieu, sir Lucan the butler, sir Bedivere his brother, sir Brandiles, sir Constantine, sir Cadors sonne of Cornewaile, which was king after Arthurs dayes, and sir Clegis, sir Sadocke, sir Dinas the seneshall of Cornewaile, sir Fergus, sir Driaunt, sir Lambegus, sir Clarus of Cleremount, sir Clodrus, sir Hectimere, sir Edward of Carnarvan, sir Dinas, sir Priamus, which was christened by the noble knight sir Tristram, and these three were brethren, sir Helaine le Blanke, which was sonne unto sir Bors, and he begat him upon king Brandegoris daughter, and sir Brian de Listinoise. Sir

[1] *Agravaile.—Aglovale,* Caxton.

Gautere, sir Reinold, sir Gillemere, were three bretheren that sir Launcelot wan upon a bridge in sir Kays armour; sir Guiart le Petie, sir Bellangere le Breuse, which was sonne unto the good sir Alisaunder Lorphelin, that was slaine by the treason of king Marke; also that false traitour king Marke slew the noble knight sir Tristram[1] as he sat harping before his lady La beale Isoud, with a trenchant glaive, for whose death was much bewailing of every knight that ever was in king Arthurs daies. There was never none so bewailed as was sir Tristram and sir Lamoracke, for they were traiterously slaine, sir Tristram by king Marke, and sir Lamoracke by sir Gawaine and his bretheren. And this sir Bellangere revenged the death of his father sir Alisaunder Lorphelin and sir Tristram[2]; and La beale Isoud died sowning upon the corps of sir Tristram, whereof it was great pitie; and all that were with king Marke that were consenting to the death of sir Tristram were slaine, as sir Andred and many other. Then came sir Hebes, sir Morganore, sir Sentraile, sir Suppinabiles, sir Bellangere le Orgulous, which the good knight sir Launcelot wan in plaine battaile; sir Neroveus and sir Plenorius, two good knights that sir Launcelot wan; sir Darras, sir Harry le fise Lake, sir Hermenid, brother to king Hermance, for whom sir Palomides fought at the red citie with two bretheren; and sir Selises of the dolorous toure, sir Edward of Orkeney, and sir Ironside, which was called the noble knight of the red lands, that sir Gareth wan for the love of dame Liones; sir Arrocke le Graunt,[3] sir Degraine saunce Vilany, that fought with the giaunt of the blacke low; sir Epinogris, that was the kings sonne of Northumberland; sir Pelleas, which loved the lady Ettard, and hee had died for her love had not beene one of the

[1] *Slew . . . sir Tristram.*—It is only necessary to remark that this account of the death of sir Tristram is totally different from that given in the older romances.

[2] *And sir Tristram.*—Caxton adds, *slewe kynge Marke.*

[3] *Sir Arrocke le Graunt.*—*Sir Arrok de Grevaunt,* Caxton.

ladies of the lake, her name was dame Nimue, and shee wedded sir Pelleas, and she saved him that he was never slaine, and he was a full noble knight; sir Lamiel of Cardife, that was a great lover; sir Plaine de Force, sir Meleaus de Lile, sir Robert[1] le Cuer hardy, which was king Arthurs sonne; sir Mador de la Port, sir Colgrevaunce, sir Hervise de la Forrest savage; sir Marrocke, the good knight that was betrayed by his wife, for shee made him well a seven yeares a warwolf;[2] sir Persaunt and sir Pertelope his brother, which was called the greene knight, and sir Perimones, brother unto them both, which was called the red knight, which sir Gareth of Orkeney wan when he was called Beaumains. Al these hundred knights and ten searched sir Urres wounds by the commandement of king Arthur.

CHAP. CXL.—How sir Launcelot was commanded by king Arthur to handle his wounds, and anon he was whole, and how they thanked God.

MERCY, Jesu," said king Arthur, "where is sir Launcelot du Lake, that he is not here at this time?" Thus as they stood and spake of many things, there was espied sir Launcelot, which came riding toward them, and anon it was told the king thereof. "Peace!" said the king; "let no manner of thing bee said untill that hee bee come to us." So when sir Launcelot espied king Arthur, he descended downe from his horse, and came unto the king, and saluted him and them all. Anon as the maiden sir Urres sister saw sir Launcelot, shee ranne unto her brother there as hee lay in his litter, and said, "Brother, heere is come a knight that my heart giveth me greatly unto." "Faire sister," said sir Urre,

[1] *Sir Robert.—Sir Bobart,* Caxton.

[2] *Warwolf.*—A man changed into a wolf by means of sorcery; a well known mediæval superstition. The printer of the edition of 1634, not understanding the word, changed it into the unmeaning phrase *war wost,* which I have corrected from Caxton.

"so doth my heart light against him, and certainely I hope now to bee healed, for my heart giveth unto him more then to all these that have searched mee." Then said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, "Yee must doe as we have done;" and told sir Launcelot what they had done, and shewed him all those that had searched sir Urre. "Jesu defend me!" said sir Launcelot, "when so many kings and knights have assaied and failed, that I should presume upon mee for to achieve that all yee, my lords, might not achieve." "Yee shal not choose," said king Arthur, "for I will command you for to doe as wee all have done." "My most renowmed lord," said sir Launcelot, "yee know well that I dare not nor may not disobey your commandement. But and I might or durst, wit ye well I would not take it upon mee to touch that wounded knight, to that entent that I should passe all other knights; Jesu defend me from that shame." "Yee take it wrong," said king Arthur, "yee shall not doe it for no presumption, but for to beare us fellowship in as much as yee bee a fellow of the round table. And wit you well," said king Arthur, "and if yee prevaile not to heale him, I dare say there is no knight in this countrey may heale him, and therefore I pray you doe as wee have done." And then all the kings and knights for the most part prayd sir Launcelot to search him. And then the wounded knight sir Urre set himselfe up full weakly, and prayed sir Launcelot heartely, saying thus, "Curteous knight, I require thee for Gods sake heale my wounds, for mee thinketh ever sithence ye came heere my wounds grieve me not." "My faire lord," said sir Launcelot, "Jesu would that I might helpe you, and I shame me sore that I should bee thus rebuked; for never was I able in worthinesse to doe so high a thing." Then sir Launcelot kneeled downe by the wounded knight, saying to him thus, "My lord king Arthur, I must needs doe your commandement, which is full sore against my heart." And then he held up his hand, and looked into the east, saying secretly

to himselfe, "Thou blessed Father, Sonne, and Holyghost, I beseech thee of thy mercy, that my simple worship and honesty be saved, and thou, blessed Trinitie, thou maist give power to heale this sicke knight by the great vertue and grace of thee, but, good Lord, never of my selfe." And then sir Launcelot prayed sir Urre for to let him see his head. And then devoutly kneeling hee ransaked the three wounds, that they bled a little; and forthwith the three wounds faire healed, and seemed as though they had beene whole seven yeares before. And in likewise he searched his body of three other wounds, and they healed in likewise. And then the last of all he searched, the which was in his hand, and anon it healed faire. Then king Arthur and all the other kings and knights kneeled downe, and gave thankes and praise unto God and to his blessed mother, and ever sir Lancelot wept as he had beene a child that had beene beaten. Then king Arthur let aray priests and clarkes in the most devoutest manner to bring sir Urre within Caerleill, with singing and praise unto God. And when this was done, the king let cloth him in the richest manner that could be devised or thought; and then were but few better made knights in all the court, for hee was passingly well made and big. Then king Arthur asked sir Urre how he felt himselfe. "My good lord," said hee, "I felt my selfe never so lusty." "Will yee justs and doe deedes of armes?" said king Arthur. "Sir," said sir Urre, "and I had all that belonged to justs, I would soone be ready."

CHAP. CXLI.—How there was made a party of an hundred knights against an hundred knights, and of other matters.

THEN king Arthur made a party of an hundred knights to bee against an hundred knights; and so on the morrow after they justed for a diamond. But there justed not one of the

dangerous knights. And so, for to make short tale, sir Urre and sir Lavaine justed best that day; for there was none of them both but hee overthrew and pulled downe thirtie knights. And then by the assent of all the kings and lords, both sir Urre and sir Lavaine were made knights of the round table; and sir Lavaine cast his love to dame Felilolie, sir Urres sister. And then they were wedded together with great joy, and king Arthur gave unto everyeach of them a barony of lands. And this knight sir Urre would never goe from sir Launcelot, but hee and sir Lavaine waited evermore upon him. And they were in all the court accounted for good knights and full desirous in armes; and many noble deeds they did, for they would have no rest, but alway sought adventures. Thus they lived in the court with great noblenesse and joy long time; but ever night and day sir Agravaine, sir Gawaines brother, awaited[1] queene Guenever and sir Launcelot, for to put them to a rebuke and shame.

And so leave I heere off this tale, and overskip great bookes,[2] of sir Launcelot du Lake, what great adventures hee did when hee was called Le chivaller du chariot, for because of despite of those knights and ladies that called him the knight that rode in the chariot like as hee had beene judged to the gallous. Therefore, in despite of all them that named him so, hee was caried in a chariot twelve moneths, for but little after he had slaine sir Meliagraunce in the queenes quarrell he never in twelve moneths came on horsback; and he did in those twelve monethes more then fortie battailes. And because I have lost the very matter of Le chivaller du chariot, I depart from the tale of sir Launcelot, and heere I goe unto the death of king Arthur, and that caused sir Agravaine.

[1] *Awaited.*—Watched.

[2] *Overskip great bookes.*—In fact a very large portion of the adventures of sir Lancelot, as they are told in the long prose romance, are omitted in the abridged narrative of Malory.

CHAP. CXLII.—How sir Agravaine and sir Mordred were busie upon sir Gawaine for to disclose the love betweene sir Launcelot and queene Guenever.

AT that season of the merry moneth of May, when every heart flourisheth and burgeneth;[1] for as the season is lusty to behold and comfortable, so man and woman rejoyce and be glad of summer comming with his fresh floures; for winter with his rough winds and blasts causeth a lusty man and woman to coure and sit by the fire; so in this season as the month of May, it hapned there befell a great anger, the which stinted not till the floure of chivalrie of all the world was destroyed and slaine. And all was long of two unhappie knights the which were named sir Agravaine and sir Mordred, that were brethren unto sir Gawaine; for these too knights, sir Agravaine and sir Mordred, had ever a privie hate unto the queene dame Guenever and unto sir Launcelot, and dayly and nightly they ever watched upon sir Launcelot. So it mishapned sir Gawaine and his brethren were in king Arthurs chamber; and then sir Agravaine said thus openly, and not in counsaile, that many knights might heare it, "I mervaile that we all be not ashamed, both to see and know how sir Launcelot lieth dayly and nightly by the queene, and all wee know it so, and it is shamefully suffred of us all, that we al should suffer so noble a king as king Arthur is so to bee shamed." Then speake sir Gawaine, and said, "Brother sir Agravaine, I pray you and charge you moove no such matter no more before me; for wit you well," said sir Gawaine, "I will not be of your counsaile." "So God mee helpe," said sir Gaheris and sir Gareth, "wee will not bee knowne, brother sir Agravaine, of your deeds." "Then will I," said sir Mordred. "I beleeve that well," sayed sir Gawaine, "for ever unto all unhappinesse, brother sir Mordred, thereto will yee graunt,

[1] *Burgeneth.*—Buddeth.

and I would that yee left all this and made you not so busie, for I know well enough," said sir Gawaine, "what will befall of it." "Fall of it what fall may," said sir Agravaine, "I will disclose it[1] unto the king." "Yee shall not doe it by my counsaile," said sir Gawaine, "for if there rise any war and wrath betweene sir Launcelot and us, wit you well, brother, there will many kings and great lords hold with sir Launcelot. Also, brother sir Agravaine," said sir Gawaine, "ye must remember how oftentimes sir Lancelot hath rescewed the king and the queene, and the best of us all had beene full cold at the heart roote had not sir Lancelot beene a better knight then we; and that hath he proved himself so oft. And as for my part," said sir Gawaine, "I wil never bee against sir Lancelot for one daies deede, as when he rescewed me from king Carados of the dolorous toure, and slew him and saved my life. Also, brother sir Agravaine, and sir Mordred, in likewise sir Lancelot rescewed you both, and three score and two, from sir Torquine. Me thinketh, brother, such kind deeds and kindnesse should be remembred." "Do as ye list," said sir Agravaine, "for I will hide it no longer." With these words come to them king Arthur. "Now, brother, stint your noise," said sir Gawaine. "We will not," said sir Agravaine and sir Mordred. "Wil ye so?" said sir Gawaine; "then God speede you, for I wil not here your tales, nor be of your counsaile." "No more will I," said sir Gareth and sir Gaheris, "for we wil never say evil by that man; for because," said sir Gareth, "sir Lancelot made me knight, by no maner ought I to say evill of him." And therewith they three departed, making great dole. "Alas!" said sir Gawaine and sir Gareth, "now is the realme hole mischived, and the noble felowship of the round table shal be dispersed." So they departed.

[1] *It.*—i. e. the intrigue between sir Launcelot and the queen Guenever.

CHAP. CXLIII.—How sir Agravaine disclosed their love unto king Arthur, and how that king Arthur gave them licence for to take him.

AND then king Arthur asked them what noise they made. "My lord," said sir Agravaine, "I shall tell you that which I may keepe no longer. Heere is I and my brother sir Mordred brake unto my brother sir Gawaine, sir Gaheris, and sir Gareth, how this we know all, that sir Launcelot houldeth your queene, and hath done long, and wee be your sisters sonnes, and wee may suffer it no longer. And we know all that ye should be above sir Launcelot, and yee are the king that made him knight; and therefore wee will prove it that he is a traitour to your person." "If it be so," said king Arthur, "wit yee well hee is none other; but I would bee loth to begin such a thing but if I might have prooves upon it, for I tell you sir Launcelot is an hardy knight, and all yee know hee is the best knight among us all: and but if he be taken with the deede, hee will fight with him that bringeth up the noise, and I know no knight that is able to match him. Therefore, and it bee sooth as yee say, I would hee were taken with the deed." For king Arthur was loth thereto that any noise should bee upon sir Launcelot and his queene; for the king had a deeming, but he would not here of it, for sir Launcelot had done so much for him and for his queene so many times, that wit ye well king Arthur loved him passingly well. "My lord," said sir Agravaine, "ye shal ride to morrow on hunting, and doubt yee not sir Launcelot will not goe with you; then when it draweth toward night, yee may send the queene word that ye will lie out all that night; and so may yee send for your cookes: and then upon paine of death we shall take him that night with the queene, and either wee shall bring him to you dead or quicke." "I will well," said the king. "Then I counsaile you," said the king, "take with

you sure feloweship." "Sir," said sir Agravaine, "my brother sir Mordred and I will take with us twelve knights of the round table." "Be well ware," said king Arthur, "for I warne you ye shall find him full waighty." "Let us deale," said sir Agravaine and sir Mordred. So upon the morrow king Arthur rode on hunting, and sent word unto the queene that he would lie out all that night. Then sir Agravaine and sir Mordred gate unto them twelve knights, and hid them selves in a chamber of the castle of Caerlell, and these were their names: first sir Colgrevaunce, sir Mador de la Port, sir Gingaline, sir Meliot de Logris, sir Petipace of Winchelsee, sir Galleron of Galway, sir Melion of the mountaine, sir Astamore, sir Gromore Somor-jour, sir Curselaine, sir Florence, sir Lovell. So these twelve knights were with sir Mordred and sir Agravaine; and all they were of Scotland, either of sir Gawaines kinne, either well willers of his bretheren. So when the night came, sir Launcelot told sir Bors how hee would goe that night and speake with queene Guenever. "Sir," said sir Bors, "yee shall not goe this night by my counsaile." "Why?" said sir Launcelot. "Sir," said sir Bors, "I alway dread me much of sir Agravaine, which waiteth you daily for to doe you shame and us all, and never gave my heart against your going that ever yee went to the queene so much as now; for I mistrust that the king is out this night from the queene, because peradventure hee hath layen some watch for you and the queen, and therfore I dread me sore of treason." "Have yee no doubt," said sir Launcelot, "for I shall goe and come againe, and make no tarying." "Sir," said sir Bors, "that me sore repenteth, for I dread me greatly that your going out this night shall wrath us all." "Faire nephew," said sir Launcelot, "I mervaile me much why yee say thus, sithence the queene hath sent for me; and wit yee well that I will not bee so much a coward but that shee shall understand I will see her good grace." "God speed you well," said sir Bors, "and send you safe and sound againe."

CHAP. CXLIV.—How sir Launcelot was espied in the queenes chamber, and how sir Agravaine and sir Mordred came with twelve knights to sley him.

SO sir Launcelot departed, and tooke his sword underneath his arme. And so that noble knight went foorth in his mantell, and put himselfe in great jeopardy; and so hee passed till hee came unto the queenes chamber; and then sir Launcelot was lightly put into the chamber, and the queene and sir Launcelot were together, and whether they were a bed or at other manner of disports, me list not thereof to make mention; for love that time was not as it is now a dayes. But thus as they were together, there came sir Agravaine and sir Mordred, with twelve knights with them of the round table, and with a crying voice they said thus: "Traitour knight sir Launcelot du Lake, now art thou taken!" And thus they cried with a loud voice, that all the court might heere it; and they al were fourteen armed at all points, as they should fight in a battaile. "Alas!" said queene Guenever, "now are we mischieved both." "Madame," said sir Lancelot, "is here any armour within your chamber that I might cover my body withall? and if there be any, I pray you heartely let me have it, and I shall soone stint their malice by the grace of God." "Truely," said the queene, "I have none armour, shield, sword, nor speare, wherefore I dread mee sore our long love is come to a mischievous end, for I heeré by their noise there bee many valiaunt knights, and wel I wot they be surely armed, against them yee may not resist. Wherfore yee are like to bee slaine, and then shall I bee brent; for and yee might escape them," said the queene, "I would not doubt but that yee would rescew me in what danger so ever I stand in." "Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "in all my life was I never thus bestood that I should be thus shamefully slaine for lacke of mine armour." But alwayes sir

Agravaine and sir Mordred cried, "Traitour knight, come out of the queenes chamber, for wit thou well that thou art so beset that thou shall not escape!" "O Jesu, mercy," said sir Launcelot, "this shamefull crie and noise we may not suffer, for better were death at once, then thus to endure this paine." Then hee tooke the queene in his armes and kissed her, and said, "Most noble christian queene, I beseech you, as ye have ever beene my speciall good lady, and I at all times your true and poore knight to my power, and as I never failed you in right nor yet in wrong sithence the first day that king Arthur made me knight, that yee will pray for my soule if that I heere bee slaine; for well I am assured that sir Bors my nephew, and all the remnant of my kinne, with sir Lavaine and sir Urre, that they will not faile you for to reschew you from the fire, and therfore, mine owne deare lady, recomfort your selfe, whatsoever come of me, that ye goe with sir Bors my nephew and sir Urre; and they all will doe you all the pleasure they can or may, that ye shall live like a queene upon my lands." "Nay, sir Lancelot," said the queen, "wit thou well I will never live a day after thy dayes; but and thou be slaine, I will take my death as meekly, for Jesu Christs sake, as ever did any christian queene." "Well, madame," said sir Launcelot, "sith it is so that the day is come that our love must depart, wit you well that I shall sell my life as deare as I may; and a thousand fold," said sir Launcelot, "I am more heavier for you then for my selfe. And now I had leaver then to be lord of all Christendome, that I had sure armour upon me, that men might speak of my deeds or I were slaine." "Truly," said queene Guenever, "I would, and it might please God, that they would take me and sley me, and suffer you to escape." "That shal never be," said sir Lancelot; "God defend me from such a shame, but, Lord Jesu, be thou my shield and mine armour."

CHAP. CXLV.—How sir Launcelot slew sir Colgrevaunce, and armed him in his armour, and after slew sir Agravaine and twelve of his felowes.

AND therewithall sir Launcelot wrapped his mantell round about his arme well and surely. And by then they had gotten a great forme out of the hall, and therewithall they dashed at the chamber doore. "Faire lords," said sir Launcelot, "leave your noise and your dashing, and I shal set open the doore, and then may yee doe with mee what it liketh you to doe." "Come off then," said they all, "and doe it, for it availeth thee not to strive against us all, and therefore let us into this chamber, and we shall save thy life untill thou come to king Arthur." Then sir Launcelot unbarred the dore, and with his lift hand hee held it open a little, so that but one man might come in at once. And so anon there came in striding a good knight, a big man and a large, which was called sir Colgrevaunce of Gore, and hee with a sword strake at sir Launcelot mightely, and he put aside the strooke, and gave him such a buffet upon the helme that hee fell downe dead, groveling within the chamber doore. And then sir Launcelot with his great might drew that dead knight within the chamber doore; and then sir Lancelot, with the helpe of the queene and her ladies, was lightly armed in sir Colgrevaunce armour. And ever stood sir Agravaine and sir Mordred crying, "Traitour knight, come out of the queenes chamber!" "Let be your noise," said sir Launcelot unto sir Agravaine, "for wit yee well, sir Agravaine, yee shall not prison me this night, and therefore doe yee by my counsaile, go ye all from this chamber doore, and make no such crying and such manner of slaunder as yee doe; for I promise you by my knighthood, and ye will depart and make no more noise, I shall as to morrow appeare before you all, and before the king, and then let it be seene which of you

all will accuse me of treason; and there I shall answere you as a knight ought to do, that hither I came unto the queen for no manner of male engine,[1] and that I will prove and make good upon you with mine owne hands." "Fie on the, false traitour!" said sir Agravaine and sir Mordred, "we will have thee maugre thy head, and sley thee if we list, for we will let thee to wit that wee have the choise of king Arthur to save thee or to sley thee." "Ah, sirs," said sir Launcelot, "is there none other grace with you? then keepe your selfe." So then sir Launcelot set the chamber doore wide open, and mightely and knightly hee strood in among them, and anon at the first buffet hee slew sir Agravaine and twelve of his fellowes, within a little while after he had laid them to the cold earth; and there was none of all the twelve that might stand with sir Launcelot a buffet; also sir Lancelot wounded sir Mordred, and he fled with all his might. And then sir Launcelot returned againe unto the queene, and said, "Madame, now wit yee wel that al our true love is brought unto end, for now will king Arthur ever bee my foe, and therfore, madame, and if it like you that I may have you with me, and I shall save you from all manner of ill adventures and daungers." "That is not best," said the queene; "me seemeth now yee have done so much harme, it will be best yee hold you still with this; and if ye see that as to morrow they will put me unto the death, then may ye rescew me as ye thinke best." "I will well," said sir Launcelot, "for have ye no doubt while I am living I shall rescew you." And then hee kissed her, and either gave other a ring; and so there hee left the queene, and went to his lodging.

[1] *Male engine.*—Wicked subtlety or craft. Every reader of Spenser will remember the character of Malengine in the "Faery Queene," which describes exactly the meaning of the word.

CHAP. CXLVI.—How sir Launcelot came to sir Bors, and told him how hee had sped, and in what adventure he had beene, and how he escaped.

SO when sir Bors saw sir Launcelot, hee was never so glad of his home comming as he was at that time. "Jesu, mercy," said sir Launcelot, "what may this meane?" "Sir," said sir Bors, "after that ye were departed from us, we all that be of your blood and your well willers were so dreaming, that some of us lept out of our beds naked; and some in their dreames caught naked swords in their hands; therfore," said sir Bors, "we deeme there is some great strife at hand; and then we all deemed that yee were betrayed with some treason, and therefore wee made us thus ready, what neede soever ye had beene in." "My faire nephew," said sir Launcelot unto sir Bors, "now shall ye wit all that this night I was more harder besteed then ever I was in my life, and yet I escaped." And so hee told them all, how and in what manner, as yee have heard before. "And therefore, my fellowes," said sir Launcelot, "I beseech you all that yee will bee of good heart in what neede soever that I stand in, for now is warre come to us all." "Sir," said sir Bors, "all is welcome that God sendeth us, and wee all have had much wealth with you and much worship, and therefore wee will take the woe with you as wee have taken the wealth; and therefore," they said all, which were many good knights, "looke that ye take no discomfort, for there is no band of knights under heaven but that we shall bee able to greeve them as much as they may us; and therefore discomfort not your selfe by no meanes, and we shall gather together those that wee love, and that loveth us, and what yee will have done shall be done; and therefore, sir Launcelot," said they, "wee will take the woe with the wealth." "Gramercy," said sir Launcelot, "of your good comfort; for in my great distresse, my faire

nephew, ye comfort me greatly, and much I am beholden unto you. But this, my faire nephew, I would that ye did in all haste that yee may, or it bee forth dayes,[1] that yee will looke in their lodgings that beene lodged heere nigh about the king, which will hold with me, and which will not, for now I would faine know which were my friends from my foes." "Sir," said sir Bors, "I shall doe what I may; and or it be seven of the clocke I shall wit of such, as yee have said before, who will hold with you or not." Then sir Bors called to him sir Lionell, sir Ector de Maris, sir Blamor de Ganis, sir Bleoberis de Ganis, sir Galahantine, sir Galihodine, sir Galihud, sir Menadewke, with sir Villiers the valiaunt, sir Hebes le Renomes, sir Lavaine, sir Urre of Hungary, sir Neroveus, and sir Plenorius, these two sir Launcelot made knights, and the one of them he wanne upon a bridge, and therefore they would never bee against him; and sir Harry le fise de Lake, and sir Selises of the dolorous toure, and sir Melias de Lile, and sir Bellangere le Beuse, which was sir Alisaunder Lorphelins son, because his mother, dame Alis la beale Pilgrim, was of kin unto sir Launcelot, hee held with him. So there came sir Palomides and sir Safire his brother to hold with sir Launcelot, and sir Clegis of Sadocke, and sir Dinas, and sir Clarius of Claremount. So these two and twentie knights drew them together, and anon they were armed and on horsebacke, and promised sir Launcelot to doe what hee would. Then there fell to them what of Northwalis and what of Cornewaile, for sir Lamoracks sake and for sir Tristrams sake, to the number of fourescore good and valiant knights. "My lords," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye wel that I have beene ever sithence I came into this countrey well willing unto my lord king Arthur and unto my lady queene Guenever unto my power; and this night, because my lady the queene sent for mee to speake with her, I suppose it was by treason, how be it I dare largely

[1] *Forth dayes.*—i. e. till the day be advanced.

excuse her person; notwithstanding I was there by a forecast nigh slaine, but, as Jesu provided mee, I escaped all their malice." And then that noble knight sir Launcelot told them all how he was hard bested in the queenes chamber, and how and in what manner he escaped from them, "And therefore," said sir Launcelot, "wit ye wel, my faire lords, I am sure there is nought but warre unto me and mine; and for because I have slaine this night these knights, as sir Agravaine, sir Gawaines brother, and at the least twelve of his fellowes, and for this cause now I am sure of mortall war. These knights were sent and ordained by king Arthur to betray mee, and therefore the king will in his heate and malice judge the queene to the fire, and that may I not suffer, that shee should bee burnt for my sake. For and I may be heard and suffered, and so taken, I will fight for the queene, that she is a true lady unto her lord; but the king in his heat, I dread me, will not take me as I ought to be taken."

CHAP. CXLVII.—Of the counsaile and advise which was taken by sir Launcelot and his friends for to save the queene.

"MY lord sir Launcelot," said sir Bors, "by mine advise yee shall take the woe with the wealth, and take it patiently, and thanke our Lord God of it; and sithence it is fallen as it is, I counsaile you to keepe your selfe, for if yee will your selfe, there is no fellowship christned of knights that shall doe you any wrong. Also I will counsaile you, my lord sir Launcelot, that and my lady queene Guenever be in distresse, in so much as she is in paine for your sake, that yee knightly rescew her; and if yee did otherwise, all the world will speake of you shame to the worlds end, in so much as yee were taken with her. Whether ye did right or wrong, it is now your part to hold with the queene, that shee bee not slaine and put to a mischievous death; for and the queene die so, the shame shall be yours." "Oh, good Lord Jesu,

defend mee from shame," said sir Launcelot, "and keepe and save my lady the queene from vilany and from shamefull death, and that she never be destroyed in my default; and therefore, my faire lords, ye that be of my kinne and my friends," said sir Lancelot, "what will ye doe?" Then they said all, "We will doe as ye will doe your selfe." "I put this to you," said sir Lancelot, "that if my lord king Arthur, by evill counsaile, will to morrow in his heate put my lady the queene to the fire, there to be burnt, now I pray you counsaile mee what is best to bee done." Then they said all at once with one voice, "Sir, wee thinke that the best that yee may doe is this: that yee knightly rescew the queene, in so much as shee shall bee burnt, it is for your sake; and it is to be supposed that if ye might be handled, ye should have the same death, or else a more shamfuller death. And, sir, wee say all, that many times yee have rescewed the queene from death for other mens quarrels, us seemeth it is more your worship that ye rescew the queene from this peril, in so much as she hath it for your sake." Then sir Launcelot stood stil, and said, "My faire lords, wit ye well that I would be loth to doe that thing that should dishonour you or my blood; and wit yee well I would be right loth that my lady the queene should die a shamefull death. But and it be soe that ye will counsaile me for to rescew her, I must doe much harme or I rescew her, and peradventure I shall ther destroy some of my best friends, which would repent me much; and peradventure there be some and they could well bring it about, or disobey my lord king Arthur, they would full soone come to mee, the which I were loth to hurt. And if so be that I should rescew her, where should I keepe her?" "That shall be the least care of us all," said sir Bors; "how did the noble knight sir Tristram by your good will? did not he keepe with him La beale Isoud nigh three yeares in Joyous-guard, the which was done by both your advises, and that same place is your owne; and in likewise may ye

doe as ye list, and take the queene lightly away, if it bee so that the king will judge her to be burnt; and in Joyous-gard yee may keepe her long enough, untill the heate of the king be past, and then shall yee bring againe the queene unto the king with great worshippe; and then peradventure ye shall have thankes for her bringing home againe, where other shall have mauger."[1] "That is hard to doe," said sir Launcelot, "for by sir Tristram I may have a warning; for when, by meanes of the treatise, sir Tristram brought againe La beale Isoud unto king Marke from Joyous-gard, looke what fell on the end, how shamefully that false traitour king Marke slew that noble knight as he sat harping before his lady La beale Isoud, with a sharpe grounded glaive thrust him behind to the heart; it greeveth mee," said sir Launcelot, "to speake of his death, for all the world may not find such a knight." "All this is truth," said sir Bors, "but there is one thing shall courage you and us all; yee know well that king Arthur and king Mark were never like of conditions, for there was never yet man that could prove king Arthur untrue of his promise." So to mak short tale, they were all consented that for better or worse, if it were so that the queene were on the morrow brought to the fire, shortly they all would rescew her. And so by the advise of sir Launcelot they put them all to an ambushment in a little wood as nigh Caerleill as they might, and there they abode still for to wit what the king would doe.

CHAP. CXLVIII.—How sir Mordred rode hastely unto the king for to tell him of the fray and death of sir Agravaine his brother, and of other things.

NOW turne wee againe unto sir Mordred, which, when hee was escaped from the noble knight sir Launcelot, he anon gat his horse, and mounted upon him, and rode straight to king

[1] *Mauger.*—Ill-will; for maugré, used as a substantive.

Arthur, sore wounded and beaten, and all beebled; and there he told the king al how it was, and how "they were al slain but me." "Jesu, mercy! how may this be?" said the king; "did yee take him in the queenes chamber?" "Yee, so God me helpe," said sir Mordred, "there we found him unarmed, and there he slew sir Colgrevaunce, and armed him in his armour." And all this hee told the king, from the beginning to the ending. "Ah, Jesu, mercy!" said the king, "he is a mervailous knight of prowesse. Alas! me sore repenteth," said the king, "that ever sir Launcelot should bee against mee; now I am sure the noble fellowship of the round table is broken for ever, for with him will hold many a noble knight; and now it is befallen so," said king Arthur, "that I may not with my worship but that the queen must suffer death." So then there was made great ordeinance in this heate that the queene must bee judged to death. And the law was such in those dayes, that what soever they were, of what estate or degree, if that they were found guiltie of treason, there should be none other remedie but death, and either the men or the taking with the deed should bee the causer of their hastie judgement. And right so was it ordained for queene Guenever; because sir Mordred was escaped sore wounded, and the death of twelve knights of the round table, these proves and experiences caused king Arthur to command the queene to the fire, there to bee burnt. Then spake sir Gawaine, and said, "My lord king Arthur, I would counsaile you not to be over hastie, but that ye would put in respite this judgement of my lady the queene for many causes: one is, though it were so that sir Launcelot were found in the queenes chamber, yet it might be so that he came thither for none evill; for yee know, my lord," said sir Gawaine, "that the queene is much beholden unto sir Lancelot, more then to any other knight alive, for often-times he hath saved her life, and done battaile for her when all the court refused the queene; and peradventure

she sent for him for goodnesse, and for none evill, to reward him for the good deeds he had done to her in time past. And peradventure my lady the queen sent for him to that entent, that sir Launcelot should come to her good grace prively and secretly, weening to her that it was best so to doe, in eschewing and dreading of slaunder; for oftentimes we doe many things that we weene it is for the best, and yet peradventure it turneth to the worst. For I dare say," said sir Gawaine, "that my lady your queene is to you both good and true; and as for sir Launcelot," said sir Gawaine, "he will make it good upon any knight living that will put upon himselfe any vilanie or shame, and in likewise he will make good for my lady dame Guenever." "That I beleeve well," said king Arthur, "but I will not that way with sir Launcelot, for hee trusteth so much upon his hands and his might that he doubteth no man; and therefore for the queene hee shall never fight more, for shee shall have the law; and if that I may get sir Launcelot, wit yee well hee shall have a shamefull death." "Jesu defend," said sir Gawaine, "that I may never see it." "Wherefore say yee so?" said king Arthur unto sir Gawaine, "for truely ye have no great cause to love sir Launcelot, for this night last past hee slew your owne brother sir Agravaine, a ful good knight, and also hee had almost slaine your other brother sir Mordred; and also there he slew twelve good knights; and also, sir Gawain, remember you how he slew two sonnes of yours, sir Florence and sir Lovell." "My lord," said sir Gawaine, "of all this I have knowledge, of whose death I repent me sore; but in so much as I gave them warning, and told my brethren and my sonnes before hand what would fall in the end, in so much as they would not do by my counsaile, I will not medle me thereof, nor revenge me nothing of their deaths, for I told them it was no bote to strive with sir Launcelot; how be it I am sory of the death of my brother and of my sonnes, for they were the causers of their owne death, for

oft times I warned my brother sir Agravaine, and told him the perrils the which bee now beefallen."

CHAP. CXLIX.—How sir Launcelot and his kinsmen rescewed the queene from the fire, and how hee slew many knights.

THEN said the noble king Arthur to sir Gawaine, "My deare nephew, I pray you that ye wil make you ready in your best aray, with your brethren sir Gaheris and sir Gareth, to bring my queene to the fire, there to have her judgement, and receive her death." "Nay, my most noble lord," said sir Gawaine, "that wil I never doe in my life, for wit you well that I will never bee in the place where so noble a queene as is my lady queene Guenever shall take such a shamefull ending; for wit you wel," said sir Gawaine, "that my heart will never serve mee to see her dye, and it shall never bee said that ever I was of your counsell of her death." Then said king Arthur unto sir Gawaine, "Suffer your brother sir Gaheris and sir Gareth to be there." "My lord," said sir Gawaine, "wit you well that they will bee loth to bee there present, because of many adventures which bee like to fall there, but they are young, and full unable to say you nay." Then spake sir Gaheris and the good knight sir Gareth unto king Arthur: "Sir, yee may well commande us to be there, but wit yee well it shall be sore against our will; but and wee bee there by your straite commandement, yee shall plainely hold us there excused, wee will bee there in peaceable wise, and beare no harneis of warre upon us." "In the name of God," said the king, "then make you ready, for she shall soone have her judgement." "Alas!" said sir Gawaine, "that ever I should endure to see this wofull day." So sir Gawaine turned him and wept heartely, and so hee went into his chamber. And then the queene was led foorth without Caerleyll, and there shee was dispoiled unto her smocke; and so then her

ghostly father was brought to her, to be shriven of her misdeeds; then there was weeeping and wailing, and wringing of hands of many lords and ladies; but there was but few in comparison that would beare any armour for to strength the death of the queen. Then was there one which sir Launcelot had sent unto that place for to espie what time the queene should goe unto her judgement. And anon, as he saw that the queene was dispoiled unto her smocke, and also that shee was shriven, then he gave sir Launcelot warning thereof. Then was there spurring and plucking up of horses; and right so they came to the fire, and who that stood against them there they were slaine, there might none withstand sir Launcelot. So all that beare armes and withstood them, there were they slaine, many a noble knight; for there was slaine sir Belias le Orgulous, sir Segwarides, sir Griflet, sir Brandiles, sir Aglovaile, sir Tor, sir Gauter, sir Guillimere, sir Reinolds, three brethren, sir Damas, sir Priamus, sir Kay the stranger, sir Driaunt, sir Lambegus, sir Herminde, sir Pertelopoe, sir Perimones, two brethren, which were called the greene knight and the red knight. And in this rashing and hurling, as sir Launcelot thrangh heere and ther, it mishapned him to sley sir Gaheris and the noble knight sir Gareth, for they were unarmed and unaware; for sir Launcelot smote sir Gareth and sir Gaheris upon the brain pans, wherethrough they were both slaine in the field; how bee it in very truth sir Launcelot saw them not, and so were they found dead among the thickest of the presse. Then when sir Launcelot had thus done, and had put them to flight all they that would withstand him, then he rode straight unto queene Guenever, and made a kirtell and a gowne to bee cast upon her, and then hee made her to bee set behind him, and praied her to be of good cheare. Wit you wel that the queene was glad that shee was escaped from death; and then shee thanked God and sir Launcelot. And so hee rode his way with the queene unto Joyous-

gard, and there hee kep her as a noble knight should doe, and many great lords and some kings sent sir Launcelot many good knights; and many noble knights drew unto sir Launcelot. When this was knowen openly, that king Arthur and sir Launcelot were at debate, many knights were glad of their debate, and many knights were sory of their debate.

CHAP. CL.—Of the sorrow and lamentation of king Arthur for the death of his two nephewes and other good knights, and also for the queene his wife.

NOW turne wee againe to king Arthur, that when it was told him how and in what manner of wise the queene was taken away from the fire, and when hee heard of the death of his noble knights, and in speciall of sir Gaheris and sir Gareths death, then the king sowned for pure sorow. And when hee was revived, he said, "Alas! that ever I bare any crowne upon my head, for I have now lost the fairest fellowship of noble knights that ever held christian king together. Alas! my good knights be slaine away from me; now within these two dayes have I lost fortie knights, and also the noble fellowship of sir Launcelot and his blood, for now I may never more hold them together with my worship. Alas! that ever this war began. Now, faire fellowes," said the king, "I charge you that no man tell sir Gawaine of the death of his two bretheren; for I am sure," said the king, "when sir Gawaine heareth that sir Gareth his brother is dead, he will nigh go out of his mind. Oh! mercyfull Jesu," said the king, "why slew hee sir Gareth and sir Gaheris? for I dare say as for sir Gareth he loved sir Launcelot above all earthly men." "That is truth," said some knights, "but they were slaine in the hurling, as sir Launcelot thrang in the thick of the presse, and as they were unarmed hee smote them and wist not

whome hee smote, and so unhappely they were slaine." "The death of them," said king Arthur, "will cause the greatest mortall warre that ever was. I am sure, wist sir Gawaine that sir Gareth were slaine, I should never have rest of him, till that I had destroyed sir Launcelots kinne and him selfe both, or else hee to destroy me; and therefore wit you well my heart was never so heavie as it is now, and much more I am sorrier for my good knights losse then for the losse of my queen, for queenes might I have enough, but such a fellowship of good knights shall never bee together in no company. And now I dare say," said the king, "that there was never christian king that held such a fellowship together. Alas! that ever sir Launcelot and I should bee at debate. Ah! Agravaine, Agravaine," said the king, "Jesu forgive it thy soule for thine evill will that thou and thy brother sir Mordred had unto sir Launcelot hath caused all this sorrow." And ever among these complaints king Arthur wept and sowned. Then there came one unto sir Gawaine, and told him how the queene was led away with sir Launcelot, and nigh twentie foure knights slaine. "Oh! Jesu, defend my brethren," said sir Gawaine, "for full well wist I that sir Launcelot would rescew her, or else hee would die in the field. And so, for to say the truth, he had not beene a man of worship if he had not rescewed the queene that day, in so much as she should have been burnt for his sake. And as in that," said sir Gawaine, "he hath done but knightly, and as I would have done my selfe, and I had stood in like case. But where are my bretheren?" said sir Gawaine, "I mervaile that I heare not of them." "Truely," said the man, "your two bretheren, sir Gareth and sir Gaheris, bee slaine." "Jesu defend!" said sir Gawaine; "for all the good in the world I would not that they were slaine, and in especiall sir Gareth." "Sir," said the man, "hee is slaine, and that is great pittie." "Who slew him?" said sir Gawaine. "Sir," said the man, "sir Launcelot slew them both."

"That may I not beleeve," said sir Gawaine, "that hee slew my brother sir Gareth; for I dare say my brother sir Gareth loved him better then mee and all his bretheren, and the king both. Also I dare say, and if sir Launcelot had desired my brother sir Gareth to have been with him, hee would have beene with him against the king and us all, and therefore I may never beleeve that sir Launcelot slew my brother." "Sir," said the man, "it is noysed that he slew him."

CHAP. CLI.—How king Arthur at the request of sir Gawaine concluded to make warre against sir Launcelot, and laid siege to his castle called Joyous-gard.

LAS!" said sir Gawaine, "now is all my joy gone." And then he fell downe in a sowne, and long he lay there as he had beene dead; and then, when hee arose out of his sowne, hee cried out so rufully, and said, "Alas!" And right so sir Gawaine ranne unto the king, crying and weeping: "Oh! king Arthur mine uncle, my good brother sir Gaheris is slaine, and my brother sir Gareth also, the which were two noble knights." Then the king wept and hee both, and they fell downe in a sowne. And when they were revived againe, sir Gawaine spake and said, "Sir, I will goe see my brother sir Gareth." "Yee may not see him," said the king, "for I caused him to bee buried and sir Gaheris both; for I wel understood that ye would make overmuch sorow, and the sight of sir Gareth should have caused your double sorrow." "Alas! mine owne lord," said sir Gawaine, "who slew my brother sir Gareth? mine owne good lord, I pray you that you will tell me." "Truely," said the king, "I shall tell you as it is told me; sir Launcelot slew him and sir Gaheris both." "Alas!" said sir Gawaine, "neither of them both beare none armes against him." "I wot not how it was," said the king, "but as it

is said, sir Lancelot slew them both in the thickest of the presse, and knew them not, and therefore let us make a remedy for to revenge their deaths."

"My most gracious lord and my uncle," said sir Gawain, "wit you well that now I shall make you a promise, the which I shall hold by my knighthood, that from this day I shall never faile sir Launcelot, untill the one of us hath slaine the other; and therefore I require you, my lord and my king, dresse you unto the warre, for wit you well I shall be revenged upon sir Launcelot. And therefore, as yee will have my service and my love, now haste you thereto, and assay your friends; for I promise unto God," said sir Gawaine, "that for the death of my brother sir Gareth I shall seeke sir Launcelot throughout seven kings realmes, but I shall sley him or else hee shall sley mee." "Ye shall not neede to seeke him so farre," said the king, "for, as I heard say, sir Launcelot will abide me and you in Joyous-gard, and much people draweth unto him as I heare say." "That may I full well beleeve," said sir Gawaine; "but, my lord, assay your friends and I will assay mine." "It shall be done," said the king, "and, as I suppose, I shall bee big enough to draw him out of the bigest toure of his castle." So then king Arthur sent letters and writs throughout all England, both in the length and in the breadth, for to assemble all his knights. And so unto king Arthur drew many knights, dukes, and earles, so that he had a great hoost. And when they were assembled, the king enformed them all how sir Launcelot had bereft him of his queene. Then the king and all his hoost made them ready to lay siege about sir Lancelot, wher as he lay within Joyous-gard. Therof heard sir Launcelot, and purveied him of many a good knight; for with him held many knights, some for his owne sake and some for the queenes sake. Thus they were on both parties well furnished and garnished of all manner of things that belonged to the warre. But king Arthurs hoost was so big that sir Launcelot would not

abide him in the field, for he was full loth to doe battaile against the king; but sir Launcelot drew him to his strong castle with all manner of vittell, and as many noble men as might suffice, both within the towne and the castle. Then came king Arthur and sir Gawaine with an huge hoast, and laid a siege about Joyous-gard, both at the towne and at the castle; and there they made full strong warre on both parties. But in no wise sir Launcelot would not ride out nor goe out of the castle of a long time, neither hee would suffer none of his good knights to issue out, neither none of the towne nor of the castle, untill fifteene weekes were past.

CHAP. CLII.—Of the communication betweene king Arthur and sir Launcelot, and how king Arthur reproved him.

SO it befell on a day in harvest that sir Launcelot looked over the walls and spake on hie to king Arthur and sir Gawaine: "My lords both, wit ye well it is in vaine that ye labour at this siege, for heere win yee no worship but dishonour and mauger, for and it list mee come out my selfe and my good knights, I should full soone make an end of this warre." "Come forth," said king Arthur unto sir Launcelot, "and thou darest, and I promise thee I shall meete thee in the middest of the field." "God defend mee," said sir Launcelot, "that ever I should encounter with the most noble king that made me knight." "Fie upon thy faire language!" said the king, "for wit thou well and trust it, that I am thy mortall foe, and ever will bee to my dying day. For thou hast slaine my good knights and the noble men of my blood, which I shall never recover againe; also thou hast lyen by my queene and holden her many winters, and sith like a traitour taken her from me by force." "My most noble king," said sir Launcelot, "ye may say what yee will, for wit you well that with your selfe I will not

strive. But whereas yee say that I have slaine your good knights, I wot well that I have done so, and that mee sore repenteth, but I was enforced to doe battaile with them in saving of my life, or else I must have suffered them to have slaine me. And as for my lady queene Guenever, except your person of your highnesse and my lord sir Gawaine, there is no knight under heaven that dare make it good upon mee, that ever I was a traitour unto your person; and where it pleaseth you to say that I have holden my lady your queene yeares and winters, unto that I shall make a large answere, and prove it upon any knight that beareth life, except your person and sir Gawaine, that my lady queene Guenever is a true lady unto your person, and that will I make good with my hands, how bee it it hath liked her good grace to have mee in charitie and to cherish mee more then any other knight. And unto my power I have deserved her love againe. For oftentimes, my lord, yee have consented that shee should bee brent and destroyed in your heate, and then it fortuned me to doe battaile for her, and or that I departed from her adversaries they confessed their untruths, and shee full worshipfully excused.

"And at such times, my lord Arthur," said sir Launcelot, "yee loved mee, and thanked me when I saved your queene from the fire, and then yee promised me for ever to bee my gracious lord, and now me thinketh ye reward me full evill for my good service. And, my good lord, mee seemeth that I had lost a part of my worship in my knighthood, if I had suffred my lady your queen to have beene brent, in so much as she should have beene brent for my sake. For sithence I have done battailes for your queene in other quarels then in mine owne, mee seemeth now I had more right to doe battaile for her in a right quarell. And therfore my good and gracious lord," said sir Launcelot, "take your queene unto your good grace, for shee is both faire, true, and good." "Fie on thee, false recreant knight," said sir Gawaine, "I let thee to wit that

my lord mine uncle king Arthur shall have his queene and thee maugre thy visage, and sley you both where as it shall please him." "It may well be," said sir Launcelot; "but wit yee well, my lord sir Gawaine, and mee list to come out of this castle, yee should win mee and the queene more harder then ever yee wanne a strong battle." "Fie upon thy proud words," said sir Gawaine, "as for my lady the queene, I will never say of her shame. Ah! thou false recreant knight," said sir Gawaine, "what cause hadst thou to sley my good brother sir Gareth, that loved thee more then all thy kin? Alas! thou madst him knight with thine hands, why slewest thou him that loved thee so well?" "For to excuse mee," said sir Launcelot, "it helpeth mee not. But, by Jesu," said sir Launcelot, "and by the faith that I owe unto the high order of knighthood, I should with as good a will have slaine my nephew sir Bors de Ganis at that time. But alas! that ever I was so unhappy," said sir Launcelot, "that I had not seene sir Gareth and sir Gaheris." "Thou liest, false recreaunt knight," said sir Gawaine, "thou slewest him in despite of me, and therfore wit thou well that I shal make warre unto thee al the while that I may live." "That me sore repenteth," said sir Launcelot, "for well I understand that it helpeth me not to seeke for none accordment whiles that yee, sir Gawaine, are so mischievously set; and if yee were not, I would not doubt to have the good grace of my lord king Arthur." "I beleeve it well, false recreaunt knight," said sir Gawaine, "for thou hast many long daies overlad mee and us all, and hast destroied many of our good knights." "Yee say as it pleaseth you," said sir Launcelot; "and yet may it never bee said on me and openly proved, that ever I before-cast of reason slew no good knight, as ye, my lord sir Gawaine, have done; and so did I never but in my defence, and that I was driven thereto in saving of my life." "Ah! false knight," said sir Gawaine, "that thou meanest by sir Lamoracke, but wit thou well that I slew him."

"Yee slew him not your selfe," said sir Launcelot, "for it had beene overmuch for you to have slaine him; for he was one of the best knights christned of his age, and it was great pitie of his death."

CHAP. CLIII.—How the cosins and kinsmen of sir Launcelot exhorted him for to goe out to do battaile, and how they made them ready.

THEN said sir Gawaine unto sir Lancelot, "Sith thou embradest[1] me of sir Lamoracke, wit thou well I shal never leave thee till I have thee at such advantage that thou shalt not escape my hands." "I trust you well enough," said sir Launcelot, "that if yee may get me I shall have but little mercy." But king Arthur would have taken his queen againe, and would have beene accorded with sir Launcelot, but sir Gawaine would not suffer him by no maner of meanes. And then sir Gawaine made many men to blow upon sir Lancelot, and al at once they called him false recreaunt knight. Then when sir Bors de Ganis, sir Ector de Maris, and sir Lionell heard this outerie, they called unto them sir Palomides, and sir Safire, his brother, and sir Lavaine, with many other moe of their blood, and all they went unto sir Lancelot, and to him they said thus: "My lord sir Lancelot, wit yee well that wee have great scorne of the great rebukes that wee heard sir Gawaine say unto you, wherefore wee beseech you and charge you, as ye will have our service, keepe us no longer within these walls; for wit you well we will ride unto the field and doe battaile with them. For ye fare as a man that were afeard, and for all your faire speech it will not availe you. For wit yee well, sir Gawaine will not suffer you to bee accorded with king Arthur, and therefore fight for your life and your right, and yee dare." "Alas!" said sir Lancelot, "for to ride out of this castle

[1] *Embradest.*—Upbraidest; reproachest. *Enbraydest,* Caxton.

and doe battaile, I am full loth to doe it." Then sir Launcelot spake on high unto king Arthur and sir Gawaine: "My lords, I require you and beseech you, sith I am thus required and conjured to ride into the field, that neithere you, my lord king Arthur, nor you, sir Gawaine, come not into the field." "What shall wee doe then?" said sir Gawaine; "is not this the kings quarrell with thee to fight? and it is my quarrell to fight with thee, sir Launcelot, because of the death of my brother sir Gareth." "Then must I needes unto battaile," said sir Launcelot; "now wit ye wel, my lord king Arthur and sir Gawaine, yee will repent it when soever I doe battaile with you." And so then they departed either from other. And then on the morrow either partie made them ready for to doe battaile, and great purveiance was made on both sides. And sir Gawaine let purvey many knights for to waite upon sir Launcelot for to overset him and to sley him. And on the morrow at underne king Arthur was ready in the field with three great hoosts. And then sir Lancelots fellowship came out at three gates in full good aray, and sir Lionell came in the formost battaile, and sir Launcelot came in the middle battaile, and sir Bors came out at the third gate. Thus they came in order and rule as valiant knights. And alwaies sir Launcelot charged all his knights in any wise to save king Arthur and sir Gawaine.

CHAP. CLIV.—How sir Gawaine justed and smote downe sir Lionell, and how sir Lancelot horsed king Arthur.

THEN came forth sir Gawaine from the kinges hoost, and he came before and proffered to just; and sir Lionel was a fiers knight, and lightly he encountred with sir Gawaine, and there sir Gawaine smote sir Lionell throughout the body, that he dashed unto the earth as hee had beene dead. And then sir Ector de Maris and moe other beare him into the castle. Then began a great stowre, and much people was

there slaine, and ever sir Launcelot did what he might to save the people on king Arthurs part. For sir Palomides, and sir Bors, and sir Safire overthrew many knights, for they were deadly knights, and sir Blamor de Ganis, and sir Bleoberis de Ganis, with sir Bellangere le Beuse, these sixe knights did much damage and hurt. And ever king Arthur was nigh about sir Lancelot for to have slaine him, and sir Launcelot suffered him, and would not strike againe. So sir Bors encountred with king Arthur, and there with a speare sir Bors smote him downe to the ground, and so he alighted and drew his sword, and said unto sir Launcelot, "Shall I make an end of this warre?" And that hee ment for to have slaine king Arthur. "Not so hardie," said sir Launcelot, "upon paine of thy head, that thou touch him no more; for I will see that most noble king that made mee knight neither slaine nor shamed." And therewithall sir Launcelot alighted from his horse, and tooke up the king and horsed him againe, and said unto him thus:

"My lord Arthur, for Gods love stint this strife, for yee may get heere no worship, and I would doe mine uttermost, but ever I forbeare you, and yee nor none of yours forbeareth mee. My lord, remember what I have done in many places, and now I am evill rewarded." When king Arthur was againe on horseback, he looked upon sir Launcelot, and then the teares burst out of his eyes thinking on the great curtesie that was in sir Launcelot more then in any other man. And therewith the king rode forth his way, and might no longer behold him, and said to himselfe, "Alas! that ever this warre began." And then either parties of the battailes withdrew them for to rest them, and buried the dead bodies, and to the wounded man they laid soft salves; and thus they endured that night till on the morrow. And on the morrow by underne they made them ready to doe battaile, and then sir Bors led them forward. So on the morrow came sir Gawaine as grim as any beare[1]

[1] *Grim.—Brym as ony bore*, Caxton. "As breme (fierce) as bore," was a sort of proverbial phrase.

with a speare in his hand. And when sir Bors saw him, he thought to revenge his brother sir Lionell of the despite that sir Gawaine had done him the other day. And so they, that knew either other, feutred their speares, and with all the might of their horses and themselves they met together so furiously that either beare other through, and so they fell both to the ground. And then the battailes joyned together, and there was great slaughter on both parties. Then sir Launcelot rescewed sir Bors, and sent him into the castle; but neither sir Gawaine nor sir Bors died not of their wounds, for they were both holpen. Then sir Lavaine and sir Urre prayed sir Launcelot to doe his paine, and fight as they had done. "For we see that yee forbeare and spare, and that doth much harme, therefore we pray you spare not your enemie no more then they doe you." "Alas!" said sir Lancelot, "I have no heart to fight against my lord king Arthur; for alway mee seemeth I doe not as I ought to doe." "My lord," said sir Palomides, "though ye spare them all this day, they will never con you thanke; and if they may get you at any vantage, yee are but dead." So then sir Launcelot understood well that they told him truth, and then he strained himselfe more then hee did aforehand, and because that his nephew sir Bors was sore wounded. And then within a little while, by evensong time, sir Launcelot and his partie better stood, for their horses went in blood above their fetlocks, there was so much people slain on both parties. And then for pittie sir Launcelot withdrew his knights, and so did king Arthurs part. And then sir Lancelot and his partie entred into their castle, and either partie buried the dead bodies and put salve to the wounded men.

So when sir Gawaine was hurt, they on king Arthurs partie were not halfe so orgulous[1] and proud as they were before to doe battaile. Of this warre was noised through all Christendome; and at the last it was noysed before the

[1] *Orgulous.*—Proud; haughty.

pope; and hee considering the great goodnesse of king Arthur and sir Launcelot, which was called the most noble knight of the world, wherfore the pope called unto him a noble clarke that at that time was there present, which was the bishop of Rochester. And the pope gave him bulls under lead unto king Arthur of England, charging him, upon paine of interditing of all England, that he take his queene dame Guenever to him againe and accord with sir Launcelot.

CHAP. CLV.—How the pope sent downe his bulls for to make peace, and how sir Launcelot brought the queene unto king Arthur.

SO when this bishop was come to Caerleill, he shewed the king these bulls; and when the king understood the buls, hee wist not what to doe. Gladly hee would accord with sir Launcelot, but sir Gawaine would not suffer him. But as for to have the queene againe, thereto hee agreed, but in no wise sir Gawaine would not suffer the king to accord with sir Launcelot; but as for the queene hee consented. And then the bishop had of his king his great seale and his assurance, as hee was a true anointed king, that sir Launcelot should come and go safe, and that the queen should not be reproved of the king, nor of none other, for nothing done before time past. And of all these appointments the bishop brought with him assurance and writing to shew sir Launcelot. So when the bishop was come to Joyous-gard, there hee shewed sir Lancelot how the pope had written unto king Arthur and unto him; and there hee told him the perils if hee withheld the queene from the king. "It was never in my thought," said sir Launcelot, "for to withhold the queene from my lord king Arthur; but in so much as she would have beene dead for my sake, mee seemeth it was my part to save her life, and put her from that danger till better recover might come. And now I thanke God

that the pope hath made her peace. For God knoweth," said sir Launcelot, "I would bee a thousand fold more gladder to bring her againe then I was of her taking away. With this that I may be sure, for me and mine, to come safe and goe safe, and that the queene shall have her liberties as she had before, and never for nothing that hath beene surmised before this time that she never from this day stand in no perill. For else," said sir Launcelot, "I dare adventure mee for to keepe her from an harder shoure then ever I kept her." "That shall not need," said the bishop, "for to dread you so much, for wit you well the pope must bee obeyed; and it were not the popes worship nor my poore honestie, to wit you distressed, neither the queene, neither in perill nor shamed." And then hee shewed sir Launcelot all his writings, both from the pope and from king Arthur. "This is sure enough," said sir Launcelot, "for full well I dare trust my lords owne writing and his seale, for hee was never yet shamed of his promise; therefore," said sir Launcelot unto the bishop, "yee shall ride unto the king before me, and recommend me unto his good grace, and let him have knowledge that this same day eight dayes, by the grace of God, I my selfe shall bring my lady queene Guenever unto him. And ye may say unto my most redoubted lord king Arthur, that I will say largly for my lady the queene, that I shall except none for dread nor feare but the king himselfe and my lord sir Gawaine, and that is more for king Arthurs love then for himselfe." So the bishop departed and came to the king at Caerleil, and told him all how sir Launcelot had answered him; and then the teares brast out of king Arthurs eyes. Then sir Launcelot purveied him an hundred knights, and all they were clothed in greene velvet, and their horses trapped to the heeles, and every knight held a braunch of olive in his hand in token of peace. And the queen had with her four and twentie gentlewomen folowing her in the same wise. And sir Launcelot had twelve coursers folowing him, and upon every

courser sate a young gentleman, and all they were arayed in greene velvet with sarpes[1] of gold about their quarters, and their horses trapped in the same wise downe to the heele with many ouches[2] set with stones and pearles in gold to the number of a thousand. And queene Guenever and sir Launcelot were clothed in white cloth of gold tissue. And right so as yee have heard, hee roade with the queene from Joyous-gard unto Caerleill. And so sir Launcelot roade throughout Caerleill, and so into the castle, that every man might behold; and wit you well there was many a weeping eye. And then sir Launcelot himselfe alighted and avoided his horse, and tooke the queene and led her where as king Arthur sate in his seate and sir Gawaine sate before him and many other great lords. So when sir Launcelot saw the king and sir Gawaine, then hee led the queene by the arme, and then hee kneeled downe and the queene both. Wit you well then was there many a bold knight with king Arthur that wept as tenderly as though they had seene all their kinne before them. So king Arthur sate still, and said not one word. And when sir Launcelot saw his countenance, hee arose and tooke up the queene with him, and thus speake hee unto the most noble king Arthur full knightly, and like a man of great honour.

CHAP. CLVI.—Of the deliverance of the queene to the king by sir Launcelot, and what language sir Gawaine gave sir Launcelot.

MY most redoubted lord, ye shall understand that by the popes commandement and yours, I have brought unto you my lady the queene, as right requireth. And if there bee any knight, of whatsoever degree hee bee, except your person, that will say or dare say but that shee is true and cleane unto you, I here my selfe, sir Launcelot, will make it good upon his body that she is a true lady unto you. But liers ye have

[1] *Sarpes.*—Girdles. [2] *Ouches.*—Clasps; fibulæ.

listned unto, and that hath caused great debate betweene you and me; for the time hath beene, my lord king Arthur, that yee have beene greatly pleased with me when I did battaile for my lady your queene. And full well ye know, my most noble lord and king, that shee hath beene put unto great wrong or this time. And sith it pleased you at many times that I should fight for her, me seemeth, my good lord, I have more cause to rescew her from the fire, in so much as shee should have beene brent for my sake; for they that told you those tales were liers, and so it fell upon them. For by likelyhood, had not the might of God beene with me, I might never have endured against fourteen knights, and they armed and before purposed, and I unarmed and not purposed. For I was sent for unto my lady your queene I wot not for what cause; but I was not so soone within the chamber doore, but anon sir Agravaine and sir Mordred called mee false traitour and recreaunt knight." "They called thee right," said sir Gawaine. "My lord sir Gawaine," said sir Launcelot, "in their quarrell they proved themselves not in the right." "Wel, wel, sir Launcelot," said king Arthur, "I have given thee no cause to doe to mee as thou hast done, for I have worshiped thee and thine more then any of all my knights." "My good lord and king," said sir Launcelot, "so ye be not displeased, ye shall understand that I and mine have often done better service then any other knights have done you in divers places; and where ye have been full hard bestead divers times, I have my selfe rescewed you from many dangers; and ever unto my power I was glad for to please you and my lord sir Gawaine, both in justs and in turnements, and in battailes set both on horsebacke and on foote I have often rescewed you and my lord sir Gawaine and many moe of your knights in divers places. For now I will make my avaunt," said sir Launcelot, "I will that yee all wit that yet I found never no manner of knight but that I was over hard for him and I had done mine uttermost, thanked be God, how be it I

have beene matched with good knights, as sir Tristram and sir Lamorake, but ever I had a favour to them and a deeming what they wer. And I take God to record," said sir Lancelot, "I was never wroth nor greatly heavie with no good knight, and I saw him busie about to winne worship. And full glad I was ever when I found any knight that might endure me on horsebacke and on foote. How be it sir Carados of the dolorous toure was a full noble knight and a passing strong man, and that wote ye, my lord sir Gawain; for he might ful wel bee called a noble knight, when he by fine force puled you out of your sadle and bound you overthwart his horse before him to his saddle bow; and there, my lord sir Gawaine, I rescewed you, and slew him before your face. And I found his brother sir Torquine in likewise leading sir Gaheris your brother bound before him, and there I rescewed your brother, and slew sir Torquine, and delivered fortie foure[1] of my lord Arthurs knights out of prison. And now I dare say," said sir Launcelot, "I met never with so strong knights, nor so well fighting, as was sir Carados and sir Torquine, for I fought with them to the uttermost; and therefore," said sir Launcelot unto sir Gawaine, "me seemeth yee ought of right for to remember this, for, and I might have your good will, I would trust to God to have my lord king Arthurs good grace."

CHAP. CLVII.—Of the communication betweene sir Gawaine and sir Launcelot, with much other language.

THE king may doe as hee will," said sir Gawaine; "but wit thou well, sir Launcelot, thou and I shall never bee accorded while wee live; for thou hast slaine three of my bretheren, and twaine of them thou slewest traiterously and piteously, for they beare no harneys against thee, nor none would beare." "God would they had beene armed," said sir Launcelot,

[1] *Fortie foure.—Thre score and foure,* Caxton.

"for then had they beene alive. And wit yee well, sir Gawaine, as for sir Gareth, I love none of my kinsmen so much as I did him; and ever while I live," said sir Launcelot, "I will bewaile sir Gareths death, not all onely for the great feare that I have of you, but many causes causeth me to bee sorrowfull. One is, for I made him knight; another is, I wote well he loved mee above all earthly knights; and the third is, hee was passing noble, true, curteous, and gentill, and well conditioned; the fourth is, I wist wel anon as I heard that sir Gaheris was dead, that I should never after have your love, but everlasting warre betweene us. And also I wist well that ye would cause my lord Arthur for ever to be my mortall foe. And as Jesu be my helpe," said sir Lancelot, "I slew never sir Gareth nor sir Gaheris by my wil. But alas! that they were unarmed that unhappy day. But thus much I offer you," said sir Lancelot, "if it may please the kings good grace and you, my lord sir Gawaine. And first I shall begin at Sandwich, and there I shall goe in my shirt and bare foote, and at every ten miles end I will found and cause to make a house of religion of what order ye will assigne me, with an hole covent, to sing and to reade day and night in especiall for sir Gareths and sir Gaheris sake; and this shall I performe from Sandwich unto Caerleill, and every house shall have sufficient livelihood; and this shall I performe while I have any livelyhood in Christendome, and there is none of all these religious places but they shall be performed, furnished, and garnished in all things as an holy place ought to be, I promise you faithfully. And this, sir Gawaine, me thinketh were more fairer and better unto their soules, then that my most noble lord Arthur and you should warre on mee, for thereby shall yee get none availe." Then al the knights and ladies that were there wept as they had beene mad; and the teares fell upon king Arthurs cheeks. "Sir Launcelot," said sir Gawaine, "I have well heard thy speech and thy great proffers, but wit thou well, let the king doe as it

shall please him, I will never forgive thee my bretherens death, and in especiall the death of my brother sir Gareth. And if mine uncle king Arthur will accord with thee, hee shall loose my service; for wit thou well that thou art both false to the king and to me." "Sir," said sir Launcelot, "hee beareth not the life that may make that good; and if that yee, sir Gawaine, will charge mee with so high a thing, yee must pardon me, for then needs must I answere you." "Nay," said sir Gawaine, "wee are past that as at this time, and that caused the pope; for he hath charged mine uncle the king that hee shall take the queene againe, and for to accord with thee, sir Launcelot, as for this season, and therefore thou shalt goe safe, sir Launcelot, as thou camest; but in this land thou shalt not abide past fifteen daies, such warning I give thee. So the king and we were consented and accorded or thou camst hither; and else," said sir Gawain, "wit thou wel that thou shouldest not have come hither, but if it were maugre thy head. And if that it were not for the popes commandement, I should do battaile with my body against thy body, and prove it unto thee that thou hast beene false unto mine uncle king Arthur and to mee both, and that shall I prove upon thy body when thou art departed from hence, where soever I find thee."

CHAP. CLVIII.—How sir Launcelot departed from king Arthur and from Joyous-gard for to goe over the sea, and what knights went with him.

THEN sir Launcelot sighed, and therewith the teares fell on his cheekes, and then hee said these words: "Alas! most noble christian realme, whom I have loved above all other realmes, and in thee have I gotten a great part of my worship, and now I shall depart in this wise. Truely me repenteth that ever I came into this realme, that should bee thus shamefully banished undeserved and causelesse. But

fortune is so variable and the wheele so mutable, there is no constant abiding, and that may be proved by many old chronicles of noble Hector, and Troylus, and Alisaunder[1] the mightie conquerour, and many other moe; when they were most in their royaltie they alighted lowest. And so fareth by mee," said sir Launcelot, "for in this realme I have had worship, and by me and mine all the whole round table hath beene encreased, more in worship by mee and my blood then by any other. And therefore wit thou well, sir Gawaine, I may live as well upon my lands as any knight that is here. And if ye, my most renoumed king, will come upon my lands with your nephew sir Gawaine for to warre upon me, I must endure you as well as I may; but as for you, sir Gawaine, if that yee come there, I beseech you and require you charge mee not with treason nor felony, for and yee doe I must answere you." "Doe thou thy best," said sir Gawaine; "therefore hie thee fast that thou were gone, and wit thou well we shall soone come after, and breake the strongest castle that thou hast upon thy head." "That shall not neede," said sir Lancelot, "for and I were as orgulus and proudly set as ye are, wit ye well I should meet with you in the middst of the field." "Make ye no more adoe," said sir Gawaine, "but deliver the queene from thee and pight thee lightly out of this court." "Well," said sir Launcelot, "and I had wist of this short answere, I would have advised mee twice or I had come hither; for and the queene had beene so deare to mee as ye noyse her, I durst have kept her from the fellowship of the best knights under heaven." And then sir Launcelot said unto queene Guenever, in heareing of the king and all the knights: "Madame, now I must depart from you and this noble fellowship for

[1] *Hector, Troylus, and Alisaunder.*—The aptness of these examples is not very clear. Hector was slain in the defence of his native country against a foreign invasion; Troilus sought his death, in battle according to the medieval story, in despair at the infidelity of his love; Alexander the Great, as all know, died of the results of a drunken orgie.

ever. And sithence it is so, I beseech you, pray for mee, and send me word if ye be noysed[1] with any false tongues, lightly, my lady, let mee have knowledge; and if that any knights hands may deliver you by battaile, I shall deliver you." And so therewith sir Launcelot kissed the queene. And then hee said openly, that all they that were there might heare him, "Now let me se what he be in this place that dare say the queene is not true unto my lord king Arthur; let see who will speake, and he dare speake." And therewith hee brought the queene unto the king, and then sir Launcelot tooke his leave and departed. And there was neither king, duke, nor earle, baron nor knight, lady nor gentlewoman, but that they all wept as people out of their wits, except sir Gawaine. And so when the noble knight sir Launcelot tooke his horse for to ride out of Carleill, there was sobbing and weeping for pure dole of his departing, and so hee tooke his way to Joyous-gard; and afterward hee called it the Dolorous-gard. And thus sir Launcelot departed from the court for ever. And so when hee came to Joyous-gard, hee called his fellowship unto him, and asked them what they would doe. Then they answered all together with one voice, that they would do as he would do. "My faire fellowes," said sir Launcelot, "I must depart out of this most noble realme, and now I shall depart, it grieveth me sore at my heart, for I shall depart with no worship. For a banished man departeth never out of no realme with worship, and that is my heavinesse, for ever I feare after my dayes that they shall chronicle upon mee that I was banished out of this realme. And else, my faire lords, be yee sure, and I had not dread shame, my lady dame Guenever and I should never have departed asunder." Then spake many noble knights, as sir Palomides, sir Safire his brother, and sir Bellanger le Beuse, and sir Urre, with sir Lavaine, and with many other: "Sir, and ye be

[1] *Noysed.*—Reported; defamed. Caxton has, *and yf ye be hard bestad by ony fals tonges, lyghtly, my lady, sende me word.*

so disposed for to abide in this countrey, wee will never faile you; and if ye list not to abide in this countrey, there is none of the good knights that be here will faile you, for divers causes. One is this, all we that bee not of your blood shall never bee welcome to the court of king Arthur. And sithence it liketh us to take part with you in your distresse and heavinesse in the realme, wit you well it shall like us all well for to goe in other countries with you, and there to take such part as ye doe." "My faire lords," said sir Launcelot, "I well understand you, and as I can I thanke you, and yee shall understand, as to such livelyhood as I am borne unto, I shall depart it with you in this manner of wise, that is to say, that I shall depart all my livelihood and all my lands freely among you, and I my selfe will have as little as any of you; for have I sufficient that may long to my person, I will aske none other rich array, and I trust to God to maintaine you on my lands as well as ever were maintained any knights." Then spake all the knights at once: "Hee have shame that will leave you; for wee all understand in this realme will bee now no quiet, but ever strife and debate. Now the fellowship of the round table is broken, for by the noble fellowship of the round table was king Arthur borne up, and by their noblenesse the king and all his realme was in quiet and in rest. And a great part," said they all, "was because of your great noblenesse."

CHAP. CLIX.—How sir Launcelot passed over the sea into his owne land, and how he made great lords of the knights that went with him.

TRUELY," said sir Launcelot, "I thanke you of your good saying, how be it, I wot wel in me was not all the stabilitie of this realme; but in that I might I did my endevour; and well I am sure I knew many rebellions in my dayes which by me were peased. I trow we al shal heare of them in

short space, and that me sore repenteth; for ever I dread mee," said sir Launcelot, "that sir Mordred will make trouble, for hee is passing envious, and applieth him to trouble." So they were accorded to goe with sir Launcelot unto his lands. And for to make short tale, they trussed and paied all that would aske them; and well an hundred knights departed with sir Launcelot at once, and made their avowes that they would never depart from him for weale nor for woe. And so they shiped at Cardife, and sailed unto Benwicke;[1] some men cal it Beyon, and some men call it Beaune, whereas the wine of Beaune is; but for to say the truth, sir Launcelot and his nephewes were lords of all the realme of Fraunce, and of all the lands that longed unto Fraunce, and hee and his kindred rejoyced it through sir Launcelots noble prowesse; and then sir Launcelot stuffed and furnished and garnished all his good townes and castles. Then all the people of those lands came unto sir Launcelot on feete and hands. And so when hee had established all these countries, hee shortly called a parliament; and there hee crowned sir Lionell king of Fraunce; and hee made sir Bors to be crowned king of all king Claudas lands; and sir Ector de Maris, which was sir Lancelots youngest brother, he crowned him king of Benwicke, and also king of all Guian,[2] which was sir Launcelots owne land; and he made sir Ector prince of them all: and thus he parted his honour. Then sir Lancelot advaunced all his noble knights. And first he advaunced those of his blood: and first hee made sir Blamore duke of Limosin in Guian; and sir Bleoberis he made him duke of Poytiers; and sir Galihantine he made him duke of Ouverne;[3] and sir Galihodin hee made him duke of Sentong;

[1] *Benwicke.*—See before, vol. i. p. 20. The attempt in the text to identify this place is curious enough. *Beyon*, in Caxton *Bayen*, is no doubt meant for Bayonne. For *Beaune*, Caxton reads *Beaume*.

[2] *Guian.*—Guienne.

[3] *Ouverne.*—*Querne*, Caxton.

and sir Galihud he made him earle of Perigort; and sir Menadeuke he made him earle of Roerge; and sir Villiers the valiant hee made him earle of Bearne; and sir Hebes le Renomes he made him earle of Comaung; and sir Lavaine hee made him earle of Arminake; and sir Urre he made him earle of Estrake; and sir Neroveus he made him earle of Perdiacke; and sir Plenorius he made him earle of Coife;[1] and sir Selises of the dolorous toure he made him earle of Masauke; and sir Melias de Lile he made him earle of Tursauk; and sir Bellangere le Beuse hee made him earle of the Laundes; and the good knight sir Palomides he made him duke of the countrie of Provence; and sir Safire hee made him duke of Langedocke; and sir Clegis hee gave him the earledome of Agent; and sir Sadocke hee gave him the earledome of Surlate; and sir Dinas the seneshall hee made him duke of Angeo; and sir Clarus hee made him duke of Normandie. Thus sir Launcelot rewarded his noble knights, and many moe, that mee seemeth it were too long to rehearse.

CHAP. CLX.—How king Arthur and sir Gawaine made a great hoost ready to goe over sea to make warre on sir Launcelot.

SO leave wee sir Launcelot in his lands, and his noble knights with him, and returne wee againe unto king Arthur and sir Gawaine, that made a great hoast ready, to the number of threescore thousand, and all thinge was ready for their shipping to passe over the sea. And so they shipped at Cardif. And there king Arthur made sir Mordred chiefe ruler of all England; and also hee put queene Guenever under his governaunce; for because sir Mordred was king Arthurs sonne, hee gave him the rule of all his land and of his queene. And so king Arthur passed over the sea, and landed upon sir Launcelots land, and there hee burnt and

[1] *Coife.—Foyse*, Caxton. I suppose meant for Foix.

wasted, through the vengeance of sir Gawaine, al that they might overrunne. When these tidings came unto sir Launcelot, that king Arthur and sir Gawaine were landed upon his lands, and that they made great destruction and wast, then speake sir Bers, and said, "My lord sir Launcelot, it is great shame that wee suffer them thus to ride over our lands; for wit you well, suffer ye them as long as ye will, they will doe you no favour and they may handle you." Then said sir Lionell, which was ware and wise, "My lord sir Lancelot, I will give you this counsaile: let us keepe our strong walled townes untill they have hunger and cold, and blow on their nailes, and then let us freshly set upon them, and shred them downe as sheepe in the field, that all aliaunts[1] may take ensample for ever how they land upon our lands." Then speake king Bagdemagus unto sir Launcelot, "Sir, your curtesie will shend us all, and your courtesie hath caused all this sorrow; for and they thus override our lands, they shall by processe of time bring us all to nought, whilest wee thus hide us in holes." Then said the good knight sir Galihud to sir Launcelot, "Sir, here be knights come of kings blood, that will not long droupe and they were without the wals; therfore give us leave, as wee are knights, to meete them in the field, and we shall sley them, that they shall curse the time that ever they came into this countrey." Then speake the seven brethren of North Wales, and they were seven noble knights as a man might seeke in seven kinges lands or he might find such seven knights, then they spake all with one voice, "Sir Launcelot, for Christs sake, let us ride out with sir Galihud, for we beene never wont to coure in castels nor in townes." Then spake sir Launcelot, which was maister and governour of them all, "My faire lords, wit you well I am full loth to ride out with my knights for shedding of christen mens blood; and yet, my lords, I understand wee are full bare to susteine any hoast a while,

[1] *Aliaunts.*—Aliens; strangers.

for the mighty warrs that other whiles made king Claudas upon this country upon my father king Ban and mine uncle king Bors; how bee it we will as at this time keepe our strong wals, and I shall send a messenger unto my lord king Arthur, desiring him to take a treatise;[1] for better is peace then alwayes warre." So sir Launcelot sent foorth a damoisel and a dwarfe with her, requiring king Arthur to leave his warre upon his lands. And so shee start upon a palfrey, and the dwarfe ranne by her side; and when shee came unto the pavilion of king Arthur, there she alighted, and there met her a gentle knight whose name was sir Lucan the butler, that said, "Faire damosell, come yee from sir Launcelot du Lake?" "Yea," said shee, "therefore come I hither for to speake with my lord king Arthur." "Alas!" said sir Lucan, "my lord king Arthur would love sir Launcelot, but sir Gawaine will not suffer him." And then hee said, "I pray to God, damoisell, yee may speede well, for all wee that are about the king would that sir Launcelot did best of any knight living." And so with this Lucan led the damosell unto king Arthur, where he sat with sir Gawaine, for to heare what shee would say. So when shee had told her tale, the water began to runne out of king Arthurs eyes. And al the lords were right glad to advise the king to bee accorded with sir Launcelot, save all only sir Gawaine, and hee said, "My lord mine uncle, what will yee do, will ye now turne againe, now yee are past thus farre upon this journey? all the world will speake of you vilany." "Nay," said king Arthur, "wite yee well, sir Gawaine, I will doe as yee will advise mee; and yet mee seemeth," said king Arthur, "his faire profers were not good to bee refused; but sithence that I am come so far upon this journey, I will that yee give the damosell her answere, for I may not speake to her for pitie."

[1] *Treatise.*—Treaty.

CHAP. CLXI.—What message sir Gawaine sent unto sir Launcelot, and how king Arthur laid siege unto Benwike, and of other matters.

THEN sir Gawaine said unto the damosell thus: "Damoisell, yee shall say unto sir Laincelot, that it was but idle labour now to send to mine unckle; for tell him, and hee would have made any labour for peace, he should have made it or this time; for tell him that now it is to late; and say that sir Gawaine sendeth him word, and that I promise him, by the faith I owe to God and unto the order of knighthood, that I shall never leave him till he hath slaine me or I him." So the damosell wept and departed, and there were many weeping eyes. And so sir Lucan brought the damosell unto her palfray; and so she came unto sir Launcelot, where as hee was among all his knights. And when sir Lancelot had heard this answere, then the teares ranne downe by his cheeks; and then his noble knights that stood about him said, "Sir Launcelot, wherfore make yee such cheare? thinke what yee are, and what men we are, and let us noble knights match them in the middest of the field." "That may lightly bee done," said sir Launcelot; "but I was never so loth to doe battaile, and therfore I pray you, faire sirs, as yee love me, be ruled as I wil have you; for I will alwayes flee that noble king that made me knight; and when I may no farther, I must needs defend mee, and that will bee the more worship for me and for every of us, then to compare with the noble king whom wee all have served." Then they held their language, and as at that night they tooke their rest; and on the morrow, early in the dawning of the day, as the knights looked out, they saw how the citie of Benweke was besieged round about, and fast they began to set up ladders; and then they defied them out of the towne, and beate them mightely from the wals. Then came forth sir Gawaine well armed at all

points upon a stiffe steed, and hee came before the chiefe gate with his speare in his hand, crying on high, "Sir Launcelot, where art thou? is there not one of you proud knights that dare breake a speare with me?" Then sir Bors made him ready, and came forth out of the towne. And there sir Gawaine encountred with sir Bors; and so he smote sir Bors downe from his horse, and almost hee had slaine him; and anon sir Bors was rescewed, and borne into the towne. Then there came forth sir Lionell, brother unto sir Bors, and thought to revenge him; and either feutred their speares, and ranne together, and there they met right spitefully. But sir Gawaine was so fiery, that he smote sir Lionel downe, and wounded him there passing sore; and then sir Lionel was rescewed, and borne into the towne. And thus sir Gawaine came every day, and failed not but that hee smote downe one knight or other. So thus they endured well halfe a yeare, and much slaughter of people there was on both parties. Then it befell upon a day that sir Gawaine came before the gates armed at all peeces upon a great courser, with a great speare in his hand; and then he cried with a loud voice, "Where art thou now, thou false traitour sir Launcelot? why doest thou hide thy selfe within hoales and walls like a coward? looke out now, thou false traitour knight, and heere I shall revenge upon thy body the death of my three bretheren." All this language heard sir Launcelot, and his kinne every deale; and then his knights drew about him, and they said all at once unto sir Launcelot, "Sir Launcelot, now yee must defend you like a knight, or else yee bee shamed for ever; for now ye be called upon treason, it is time for you to stirre, for yee have slept over long, and suffered over much." "So God mee helpe," said sir Launcelot, "I am right heavie of sir Gawaines words, for now he chargeth me with a great charge; and therefore I wot it as well as yee that I must defend me, or else to bee a recreaunt knight." Then sir Launcelot commanded to saddle his strongest horse, and bad fetch his armour, and

bring all unto the gate of the toure. And then sir Launcelot spake on high unto king Arthur, and said, "My lord and noble king which made mee knight, wit you well that I am right heavie for your sake, that ye thus sew[1] upon mee, and allwaies I forbeare you; for, and I would have beene revengeable, I might have met you in the middest of the field, and there to have made your boldest knights full tame; and now I have forborne you halfe a yeare, and have suffered you and sir Gawaine to doe what ye would, and now I may endure it no longer; now must I needes defend my selfe, in so much as sir Gawaine hath appealed me of treason, the which is greatly against my will, that ever I should fight against any of your blood; but now I may not forsake it, I am driven thereto as a best to a bay." Then sir Gawaine said unto sir Launcelot, "Sir Launcelot, and thou darest doe battaile, leave thy babling and come off, and let us ease our hearts." Then sir Launcelot began to arme him lightly, and mounted upon his horse; and either of the knights gat great speares in their hands, and the hoast without stood still apart. And the noble knights came out of the citie by a great number, in so much that when king Arthur saw the number of men and knights, hee mervailed, and said to himselfe, "Alas! that ever sir Launcelot was against me, for now I see that hee hath forborne me." And so the covenant was made, there should no man come nigh them, nor deale with them, till that one were dead or yeelden.

CHAP. CLXII.—How sir Gawaine and sir Launcelot did battaile together, and how sir Gawaine was hurt.

THEN sir Gawaine and sir Launcelot departed a great way in sunder; and then they came together with all their horses might, as fast as they myght runne, and either smote other in the middest of their sheelds. But the knights were so

[1] *Sew.*—Pursue; prosecute.

strong, and their speares so bigge, that their horses might not endure their buffets; and so their horses fell to the earth. Then they avoided their horses, and dressed their shields before them; then they stode together, and gave many sadde strokes upon divers places of their bodyes, that the blood braste out of many places. Then had sir Gawaine such a grace and gift, which an holy man had given him, that every day in the yeare from underne till high noone, his might encreased those three houres as much as thryce his owne strength; and that caused sir Gawaine to winne great honour; and for his sake king Arthur made an ordinance that all manner of battayles for any quarrels that should bee done before king Arthur, they should begin at underne. And all this was done for sir Gawains sake, that by likelyhood if that sir Gawaine were on the one partie hee shold have the better hand in battaile while that his strength endured three houres. But there were but few knights that time living that knew this vantage that sir Gawaine had, but king Arthur all onely. Thus sir Launcelot fought with sir Gawaine; and when sir Launcelot felt his might evermore encrease, sir Launcelot had of him great wonder, and dread him sore to be shamed; for he wend when he felt sir Gawaine double his strength, that he had been a feend, and non earthly man, wherfore sir Launcelot traced and traversed and covered himselfe with his shield, and kept his might and his breath during three houres. And that while sir Gawaine gave him many sad brunts and many strokes, that all knights that beheld sir Launcelot mervailed how he might endure him; but ful little understood they the travaile that sir Launcelot had for to endure him. And then when it was past noone, sir Gawaine had no more but his owne might. Then when sir Launcelot felt him so come downe, then began he to stretch himselfe up, and stood neere sir Gawaine, and said to him these words, "My lord sir Gawain, now I feele that yee have done; now, my lord sir Gawaine, I must doe my part,

for many great and grievous strookes I have endured you this day with great paine." Then sir Launcelot began to double his strookes, and gave sir Gawaine such a buffet upon the helmet, that he fell downe on his side, and then sir Launcelot withdrew him from him. "Why withdrawest thou thy selfe?" said sir Gawaine; "now turne againe, traitour knight, and slay me; for and thou leave mee thus, when I am whole I shal doe battaile with thee againe." "Sir, I shall endure you by the grace of God," said sir Launcelot; "but wit you well, sir Gawaine, I will never smite a felled knight." And so sir Launcelot went into the citie, and sir Gawaine was borne into one of king Arthurs pavilions; and anon there was leaches brought to him, which searched his wound, and salved it with soft oyntments. And then sir Launcelot said, "Now have good day, my lord the king, for wit ye well ye shall winne no worship at these walls; and if I would bring out my knights, there should many a man die. Therefore, my lord king Arthur, remember you of old kindnesse, and how so ever I fare, Jesu be your guide in all places."

CHAP. CLXIII.—Of the sorrow that king Arthur made for the warre, and of another battaile, where also sir Gawaine had the worse.

ALAS," said the king, "that ever this unhappie warre began! for ever sir Launcelot forbeareth me in all places, and in likewise my kinne, and that is seene this day by my nephew sir Gawaine." Then king Arthur fell sicke for sorrow of sir Gawaine that was so sore hurt, and because of the warre betweene him and sir Launcelot. So then they of king Arthurs part kept the siege with little warre and small force; and they within kept their walls and defended them when neede was. Thus sir Gawaine lay sicke about three weekes in his tent, with all manner of leachcraft that

might be had. And as soone as sir Gawaine might goe and ride, he armed him at al points and start upon a courser, and gat a speare in his hand. And so he came riding before the chiefe gate of Benwike, and there he cried on high, "Where art thou, sir Launcelot? come forth, thou false traitour knight and recreaunt! for I am here, sir Gawaine, will prove this that I say on thee." All this language sir Launcelot heard, and then hee said thus: "Sir Gawaine, mee repenteth of your foule saying, that ye will not sease of your language. For wit yee well, sir Gawaine, I know your might, and all that yee may doe; and well yee wote, sir Gawaine, that yee maie not greatly hurt mee." "Come downe, thou traitour knight! and make it good the contrary with thy hands; for it mishapned mee the last battaile to be hurt of thy hands; therfore wit thou wel that I am come this day to make amends. For I wene this day to lay thee as low as thou laidest mee." "Jesu defend me," said sir Launcelot, "that ever I should bee so far in your danger as yee have beene in mine, for then my dayes were at an end. But, sir Gawaine," said sir Launcelot, "yee shall not thinke that I tary long; but sithence that yee so unknightly call mee of treason, yee shall have both your hands full of mee." And then sir Launcelot armed him at all points, and mounted upon his horse, and gate him a great speare in his hand, and rode out at the gate. And both the hoasts were assembled of them without and of them within, and stood in aray full manly; and both parties were charged for to hold them still to see and behold the battaile of these two noble knights. And then they laid their speares in their rests, and they ranne together as thunder. And sir Gawaine brake his speare upon sir Lancelot in an hundred peeces unto his hand. And sir Launcelot smote him with a greater might, that sir Gawaines horse feete reised, and so the horse and he fell to the earth. Then sir Gawaine full quickly avoided his horse, and put his shield before him,

and egerly drew his sword, and bad sir Launcelot "alight, traitour knight! for though this maieres sonne hath failed me, wite thou well that a kings sonne and a queenes sonne shall not faile thee." Then sir Launcelot avoided his horse, and dressed his shield before him, and drew his sword. And so they stood together and gave many sad strookes, that all men on both parties had thereof passing great wonder. But when sir Launcelot felt sir Gawaines might so mervailously encreased, hee then withheld his courage and his wind, and kept himselfe wonderous covert of his might, and under his shield hee trased and traversed here and there for to breake sir Gawaines strookes and his courage. And sir Gawaine enforced him with all his might and power to destroy sir Launcelot, for ever as sir Gawaines might encreased, right so encreased his wind and his evill will. Thus sir Gawaine did great paine unto sir Launcelot three houres continually, that sir Launcelot had great paine to defend himselfe. And after that the three houres were passed, then sir Launcelot felt verily that sir Gawaine was come to his owne proper might and strength, and that his great power was done. Then sir Launcelot said unto sir Gawaine, "Now have I well proved you twise, that yee are a full dangerous knight, and a wonderfull man of your might, and many wonderfull deeds have you done in your dayes; for by your might encreasing yee have deceived many a noble and valiaunt knight, and now I feele that yee have done your mighty deed. Now wit you well I must doe my deeds." And then sir Launcelot stood neere sir Gawaine, and doubled his strookes; and sir Gawaine defended him mightely. But neverthelesse sir Launcelot smote such a strooke upon sir Gawaines helme and upon the old wound, that sir Gawaine sanke downe upon his one side in a sowne. And anon as hee was awake, hee waved and foyned at sir Launcelot there as he lay, and said: "Traitour knight! wite thou well that I am not yet slaine; come thou neere and performe this battaile to the utter-

most." "I will no more doe then I have done," said sir Launcelot, "for when I see you on foot, I will doe battaile with you all the while I see you stand on your feete, but for to smite a wounded man that may not stand, God defend me from such a shame." And then he turned him, and went his way toward the towne, and sir Gawaine ever more calling him traitour knight, and said, "Wit thou well, sir Launcelot, when I am hole I shall doe battaile with thee againe, for I shal never leave thee till that one of us bee slaine."

Thus as this siege endured, and as sir Gawaine lay sicke neere a moneth, and when hee was well recovered and ready within three daies to doe battaile againe with sir Launcelot, right so came tiding unto king Arthur from England, that made king Arthur and all his hoast to remoove.

CHAP. CLXIV.—How sir Mordred presumed and tooke on him to bee king of England, and would have married the queene.

AS sir Mordred was ruler of all England, hee caused letters to be made as though they came from beyond the sea, and the letters specified that king Arthur was slaine in battaile with sir Launcelot; wherfore sir Mordred made a parlament, and called the lords together, and there he made them to choose him king. And so hee was crowned at Caunterbury, and held a feast there fifteene daies. And afterward hee drew him to Winchester, and there hee tooke queene Guenever, and said plainely that hee would wed her which was his unkles wife and his fathers wife; and so hee made ready for the feast, and a day prefixt that they should bee wedded. Wherfore queene Guenever was passing heavy; but shee durst not discover her heart, but speake faire and agreed to sir Mordred will. Then she desired of sir Mordred for to goe to London for to bye all maner thing that belonged unto the wedding; and because of her faire speech, sir

Mordred trusted her well enough, and gave her leave to goe. And when shee came to London, she toke the toure of London, and sodeinly in all hast possible she stuffed it with all manner of vittaile, and well garnished it with men, and so kept it. Then when sir Mordred wist and understood how he was deceived, he was passing wroth out of measure. And to make short tale, hee went and laid a mighty siege about the toure of London, and made many great assaults thereat, and threw many great engines unto them, and shot great gunnes; but all might not prevaile sir Mordred. For queene Guenever would never for faire speech nor for foule trust to come in his hands againe. And then came the bishop of Canterbury, the which was a noble clarke and an holy man, and thus he said to sir Mordred: "Sir, what will yee doe? will yee first displease God, and after shame your selfe and all knighthood? Is not king Arthur your unckle, no further but your mothers brother, and on her himselfe king Arthur begate you, upon his owne sister? therefore how may yee wed your fathers wife? Sir," said the noble clarke, "leave this opinion, or else I shall cursse you with booke, bell, and candell." "Do thy worst," said sir Mordred; "wit thou well that I utterly defie thee." "Sir," said the bishop, "I shall not feare mee to doe that I ought to doe. Also, where as yee noise that my lord king Arthur is slaine, it is not so, and therfore yee will make an abhominable worke in this land." "Peace, thou false priest!" said sir Mordred, "for and thou chafe me any more, I shall make thy head to be stricken off." So the bishop departed, and did the cursse in the most orguloust wise that might be done. And then sir Mordred sought the bishop of Caunterbury for to have slaine him. And when the bishop heard that, he fled, and tooke part of his goods with him, and went nigh unto Glastenbury, and there he was a religious hermit in a chappell, and lived in poverty and in holy praiers. For well he understood that a mischievous warre was neere at hand. Then sir Mordred sought upon

queene Guenever by letters and sonds,[1] and by faire meanes and foule, for to have her to come out of the toure of London; but all this availed him not, for shee answered him shortly, openly, and prively, that she had leaver sley her selfe then to be maried with him. Then came word to sir Mordred that king Arthur had raised the siege from sir Launcelot, and that hee was comming home ward with a great hoast, for to be avenged upon sir Mordred. Wherfore sir Mordred made to write letters unto all the barrony of this land, and much people drew unto him; for then was the common voice among them, that with king Arthur was none other life but warre and striefe, and with sir Mordred was great joy and blisse. Thus was king Arthur depraved and evill said of, and many there were that king Arthur had made up of naught, and had given them lands, might not say of him then a good word.

Loe wee all English men see what a mischiefe here was; for hee that was the noblest king and knight of the world, and most loved the fellowship of noble knights and men of worship, and by him they were all upholden, now might not wee English men hold us content with him. Loe this was the old custome and usage of this land. And also men say that we of this land have not yet lost nor forgotten the custome and usage.[2] Alas! alas! this is a great default of us English-men, for there may nothing please us no tearme. And so fared the people at that time. For they were better pleased with sir Mordred then they were with king Arthur, and much people drew unto sir Mordred, and said they would abide with him for better and for worse. And so sir Mordred drew with a great hoast toward Dover, for there he heard say that king Arthur would arrive. And so hee thought to beate his owne father from his lands. And the most part of all England held with sir Mordred, the people were so new fangled.

[1] *Sonds.*—Messages.

[2] *Usage.*—This was written while the country was still suffering from the wars of the roses.

CHAP. CLXV.—How after that king Arthur had tidings, he returned and came to Dover, where sir Mordred met him to let his landing, and of the death of sir Gawaine.

AND so as sir Mordred was at Dover with his hoast, there came king Arthur with a great navy of ships, galies, and caraks.[1] And there was sir Mordred ready waiting upon his landing, to let[2] his owne father to land upon the land that he was king off. Then was there launcing of great boates and small, and all were full of noble men of armes; and there was much slaughter of gentle knights, and many a full bold baron was laid full low on both parties. But king Arthur was so couragious, that there might no manner of knight let him to land, and his knights fiersly followed him, and so they landed maugre sir Mordred and all his power, and put sir Mordred back, that he fled and all his people. So when this battaile was done, king Arthur let bury his people that were dead. And then was the noble knight sir Gawaine found in a great boate lying more then halfe dead. When king Arthur wist that sir Gawaine was laid so low, he went unto him; and there the king made sorrow out of measure, and took sir Gawaine in his armes, and thrice hee sowned. And when hee came to himselfe againe, hee said, "Alas! my sisters sonne, here now thou liest, the man in the world that I loved most, and now is my joy gone. For now, my nephew sir Gawaine, I will discover me unto your person. In sir Launcelot and you I most had my joy and mine affiance, and now have I lost my joy of you both, wherefore all mine earthly joy is gone from me." "My uncle king Arthur," said sir Gawaine, "wit you well that my

[1] *Caraks.*—Carracks, in the earlier history of mediæval navigation, were small vessels, not the large ones to which the name was applied at a later period.

[2] *To let.*—To hinder.

deathes day is come, and all is through mine owne hastinesse and wilfulnesse, for I am smitten upon the old wound that sir Launcelot du Lake gave me, of the which I feele that I must die; and if sir Launcelot had beene with you as hee was, this unhappie warre had never begun, and of all this I my selfe am causer; for sir Lancelot and his blood, through their prowesse, held all your cankered enemies in subjection and danger. And now," said sir Gawain, "ye shall misse sir Launcelot. But alas! I would not accord with him; and therefore," said sir Gawaine, "I pray you, faire uncle, that I may have paper, pen, and inke, that I may write unto sir Launcelot a letter with mine owne hands." And when paper and inke was brought, sir Gawaine was set up weakely by king Arthur, for hee had beene shriven a little before; and hee wrote thus unto sir Launcelot: "Floure of all noble knights that ever I heard of or saw in my dayes; I, sir Gawaine, king Lots sonne of Orkeney, sisters sonne unto the noble king Arthur, send unto thee greeting, and let thee have knowledge, that the tenth day of May I was smitten upon the old wound which thou gavest mee before the citie of Benwicke, and through the same wound that thou gavest mee I am come unto my death day, and I will that all the world wit that I sir Gawaine, knight of the round table, sought my death, and not through thy deserving, but it was mine owne seeking; wherefore I beseech thee, sir Launcelot, for to returne againe unto this realme and see my tombe, and pray some prayer more or lesse for my soule. And that same day that I wrote this letter, I was hurt to the death in the same wound the which I had of thy hands, sir Launcelot, for of a more nobler man might I not bee slaine. Also, sir Launcelot, for all the love that ever was betweene us, make no tarying, but come over the sea in all the hast that thou maiest with thy noble knights, and rescew that noble king that made thee knight, that is my lord and uncle king Arthur, for hee is full straightly bestood with a false traitour, which is my

half brother sir Mordred, and he hath let crowne himselfe king, and he would have wedded my lady queene Guenever, and so had he done, if shee had not put her selfe in the toure of London. And so the tenth day of May last past, my lord and uncle king Arthur and we al landed upon them at Dover, and there we put that false traitour sir Mordred to flight. And there it misfortuned me for to be stricken upon thy strooke. And at the date of this letter was written but two houres and halfe before my death, written with mine owne hand, and so subscribed with part of my heart blood. And I require thee, as thou art the most famost knight of the world, that thou wilt see my tombe." And then sir Gawaine wept, and also king Arthur wept; and then they sowned both. And when they awaked both, the king made sir Gawaine to receive his Saviour. And then sir Gawaine prayed the king to send for sir Launcelot, and to cherish him above all other knights. And so at the houre of noone sir Gawaine betooke his soule into the hands of our Lord God. And then the king let bury him in a chappell within the castle of Dover;[1] and there yet unto this day all men may see the skull of sir Gawaine, and the same wound is seene that sir Launcelot gave him in battaile. Then was it told to king Arthur that sir Mordred had pight a new field upon Barendowne.[2] And on the morrow the king rode thither

[1] *Castle of Dover.*—Leland (*Collectanea*, vol. iii. p. 50) tells us that the bones of sir Gawaine were shown to him when he visited Dover; but they have disappeared since his time. The chapel alluded to was, no doubt, the very ancient building attached to the Roman pharos in Dover castle. It may be remarked that, according to the narrative of the original romance of the Mort Artus (by Mapes), Gawaine's body was taken to Camelot to be buried by the side of his brother Gaheret. Other versions of the romance state very diversely both the place of Gawaine's death and that of his burial.

[2] *Barendowne.*—*Baramdoune*, Caxton. This is, no doubt, meant for Barham-down, near Canterbury; a place well known to antiquaries on account of its early Anglo-Saxon cemetery, the existence of which, doubtless, gave rise to the notion of a battle having been fought there.

to him, and there was a great battaile betweene them, and much people were slaine on both parts. But at the last king Arthurs partie stood best, and sir Mordred and his partie fled unto Canterbury.

CHAP. CLXVI.—How after sir Gawaines goast appeared unto king Arthur, and warned him that he should not fight as at that day.

AND then the king searched all the townes for his knights that were slaine, and made to bury them; and those that were sore wounded he caused them to be salved with soft salves. Then much people drew unto king Arthur, and said that sir Mordred warred on king Arthur wrongfully. And then the noble king drew him with his hoast downe unto the sea side westward unto Salisbury; and there was a day assigned betweene king Arthur and sir Mordred, that they should meete upon a downe beside Salisbury and not farre from the sea side; and this day was assigned upon a Munday after Trinitie Sunday, whereof king Arthur was passing glad that hee might bee avenged upon that traitour sir Mordred. Then sir Mordred raised much people about London, for they of Kent, Southsexe, and Southery,[1] Essexe, and Suffolke, and of Norfolke, held the most part with sir Mordred; and many a noble knight drew unto sir Mordred and unto king Arthur; but they that loved sir Launcelot drew unto sir Mordred.

And so upon Trinitie Sunday at night king Arthur dreamed a right wonderfull dreame, and that was this, that him thought hee sate upon a chaflet[2] in a chaire, and the chaire was fast unto a wheele, and thereupon sate king Arthur in the richest cloth of gold that might bee made. And the king thought there was under him farre from him a hedious and a deepe blacke water, and therein was all manner of serpents and wormes, and wild beasts foule and

[1] *Southery.*—Surrey. [2] *A chaflet.*—A scaffold.

horrible; and suddainely the king thought that the wheele turned up-side downe, and that hee fell among the serpents and wilde beasts, and every beast tooke him by a limme; and then the king cried, as hee lay in his bed and slept, "Helpe!"

And then knights, squires, and yeomen awaked the king; and then hee was so amased that hee wist not where hee was; and then hee fell in a slumbering againe, not sleeping nor throughly waking. So king Arthur thought that there came sir Gawaine unto him verely, with a number of faire ladies with him; and so when king Arthur saw him, hee said. "Welcome, my sisters sonne, I wend thou hadst beene dead, and now I see thee alive, much am I beholding unto Almightie Jesu; oh, faire nephew and my sisters sonne, what bee these ladies that bee come hither with you?" "Sir," said sir Gawaine, "all these bee the ladies for whom I have fought when I was a man living; and all these are those that I did battaile for in a rightwise quarrell, and God hath given them that grace at their great prayer, because I did battaile for them, that they should bring mee hither to you; thus much hath God given mee leave for to warne you of your death. For and yee fight as to morrow with sir Mordred, as both yee have assigned, doubt yee not yee must bee slaine, and the most part of your people on both parties. And for the great grace and goodnesse that Almightie Jesu hath unto you, and for pittie of you and many moe other good men that there should bee slaine, God hath sent mee unto you of his most speciall grace for to give you warning, that in no wise yee doe battaile as to morrow, but that yee take a treatise for a monethes day and proffer him largely, so as to morrow to bee put in a delay; for within a moneth shal come sir Launcelot with all his noble knights, and shall rescew you worshipfully, and sley sir Mordred and all that ever will hold with him."

Then sir Gawaine and all the ladies vanished. And anon the king called upon his knights, squires, and yeomen,

and charged them lightly to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him. And when they wer come, the king told them his vision, what sir Gawaine told him, and warned him that if he fought on the morrow he should bee slaine. Then the king commanded sir Lucan the butler, and his brother sir Bedevere, and two bishops with them, and charged them in any wise if they might take a treatise for a moneth with sir Mordred, "and spare not to proffer him lands and goods as much as yee thinke best." So then they departed, and came to sir Mordred, where hee had a grimly hoast of an hundred thousand men; and there they entreated sir Mordred long time, and at the last sir Mordred was agreed to have Cornewaile and Kent by king Arthurs dayes, and after the dayes of king Arthur to have all England to his obeysance.

CHAP. CLXVII.—How by misadventure of an adder the battaile began, where sir Mordred was slaine and king Arthur wounded to death.

SO then were they condescended that king Arthur and sir Mordred should meete betweene both their hoosts, and everyech of them should bring fourteene persons. And they came with this word unto king Arthur, and then said hee, "I am glad that this is done." And so hee went into the fields; and when king Arthur should depart, hee warned all his hoost that, and they saw any sword drawen, "looke that yee come on fiersly, and sley that traitour sir Mordred, for I in no wise trust him." In like wise sir Mordred did warne his hoost that "if ye se any manner of sword drawen, looke that yee come on fiersly, and so sley all that ever standeth before you, for in no wise I will not trust for this treatise, for I know well that my father will bee avenged upon me." And so they met as their appointment was, and were agreed and accorded throughly, and wine was fet, and they dranke. Right so came an adder out of a little heath

bush, and it stung a knight on the foote; and when the knight felt him stung, he looked downe and saw the adder, and then hee drew his sword to sley the adder, and thought of none other harme. And when the hoosts on both parties saw that sword drawen, they blew beumes,[1] trumpets, and hornes, and showted grimley. And so both hoosts dressed them together, and king Arthur tooke his horse, and said, "Alas, this unhappy day!" and so roade he to his party. And so sir Mordred did in like wise; and never was there seene a more dolefuller battaile in no christian land, for there was but rashing and riding, foyning and stricking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But alway king Arthur roade throughout the battaile of sir Mordred many times, and did there right nobly as a noble king should doe, and at all times he never fainted; and sir Mordred that day put him in devore[2] and in great perill. And thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted till the noble knights were laid to the cold ground: and ever they fought still till it was nigh night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the doune. Then was king Arthur wroth out of measure, when he saw his people so slaine from him. Then the king looked about him, and then was hee warre that of all his hoost, and of al his good knights, were left no moe alive but two knights, that was sir Lucan the butler and sir Bedivere his brother, and they were right sore wounded. "Jesu mercy!" said king Arthur, "where are all my noble knights become? alas! that ever I should see this dolefull day; for now," said king Arthur, "I am come unto mine end; but would to God that I wist were that traitour sir Mordred is, which hath caused all this mischiefe." Then was king Arthur ware where sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heepe of dead men. "Now give mee my speare," said

[1] *Beumes.*—For beames, a sort of trumpets.
[2] *Devore.*—*Devoyr*, Caxton; i.e. duty.

king Arthur to sir Lucan, "for yonder I have espied the traitour which hath wrought all this woe." "Sir, let him be," said sir Lucan, "for hee is unhappy; and if yee passe this unhappy day yee shall bee right well revenged upon him. My good lord, remember well your dreame that yee had this night, and what the spirit of sir Gawaine told you this night; yet God of his great goodnesse hath preserved you hitherto, therefore, for Gods sake, my lord, leave off by this, for blessed bee God yee have wonne the field; for heere wee bee three on live, and with sir Mordred is none alive. And if yee leave off now, this wicked day of destine is done." "Betide me death, betide me life," said the king, "now I see him yonder alone hee shall never escape my hands, for at a better vantage shall I never have him." "God speed you well," said sir Bedivere. Then king Arthur gate his speare in both his hands, and ranne toward sir Mordred, crying, "Traitour, now is thy death day come!" And when sir Mordred heard king Arthur, hee ran unto him with his sword drawen in his hand, and there king Arthur smote sir Mordred under the shield with a foine of his speare throughout the body more than a fadom. And when sir Mordred felt that hee had his death wound, he thrust himselfe with all the might that hee had up to the end[1] of king Arthurs speare, and right so he smote his father Arthur with his sword that hee held in both his hands on the side of the head, that the sword perced the helmet and the brain-pan. And therwith sir Mordred fel downe starke dead to the earth, and the noble king Arthur fell in a sowne to the earth, and there hee sowned oftentimes. And sir Lucan and sir Bedivere oftentimes heaved him up, and so weakly they lad him betweene them both unto a little chappell not farre from the sea side. And when the king was there, hee thought him well eased. Then heard they people crie in the field. "Now go thou, sir Lucan," said the king, "and doe me to wite what be-

[1] *End.—Bur*, Caxton. The *bur* of the spear was the broad iron ring just below the gripe, which prevented the hand from slipping.

tokeneth that noise in the field." So sir Lucan departed, and hee was grievously wounded in many places; and so as hee went, hee saw and harkned by the moone light how that pillers and robbers were come into the field, for to pill and robbe many a noble knight of brooches and beades, of many a good ring, and of many a rich jewell; and who that were not dead all out, there they slew them for to have their harneis and their riches. And when sir Lucan understood this worke, hee came unto the king as soone as he might, and told him all that hee had heard and seene. "Therefore, by mine advise," said sir Lucan, "it is best that wee bring you unto some towne." "I would it were so," said the king.

CHAP. CLXVIII.—How king Arthur commaunded to cast his sword Excalibur in the water, and how hee was delivered unto ladies in a barge.

BUT I may not stand, my head aketh so. Ah, sir Launcelot," said king Arthur, "this same day have I sore missed thee. Alas! that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, wherof sir Gawaine warned me in my dreame." Then sir Lucan tooke up king Arthur on the one part, and sir Bedivere on the other part, and in the lifting the king sowned. And sir Lucan fel in a sowne with that lift, that some of his guts fell out of his body, and therewith the noble knights heart brast. And when king Arthur came to himselfe againe, he beheld sir Lucan, how he lay fooming at the mouth, and part of his bowels fell to his feete. "Alas!" said king Arthur, "this is unto mee a full heavy sight, for to see this noble duke so to die for my sake, for hee would have holpen me that had more neede of helpe than I have. Alas! hee would not complaine him, his heart was so set for to helpe me. Now Jesu have mercy upon his soule!" Then sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. "Leave this weeping and mourning," said king Arthur, "for all this wil not avail mee; for wit thou well, and I might live my selfe,

the death of sir Lucan would greeve me evermore. But my time hieth fast," said king Arthur unto sir Bediver, "therfore take thou Excalibur my good sword, and goe with it unto yonder water side, and, when thou commest there, I charge thee throw my sword into that water, and come againe and tell me what thou shalt see there." "My lord," said sir Bedivere, "your commande shall be done, and lightly bring you word againe." And so sir Bedivere departed; and by the way he beheld that noble sword where the pummell and the haft were all of precious stones, and then hee said to himselfe, "If I throw this rich sword into the water, thereof shall never come good, but harme and losse." And then sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree, and as soone as hee might he came againe unto king Arthur, and said hee had beene at the water, and had throwen the sword into the water. "What sawest thou there?" said the king. "Sir," said he, "I saw nothing but waves and wind." "That is untruely said of thee," said king Arthur, "therefore goe thou lightly and doe my command, as thou art to mee lefe and deere; spare not, but throw it in." Then sir Bedivere returned againe, and tooke the sword in his hand; and then him thought it sinne and shame to throw away that noble sword. And so eft[1] hee hid the sword, and returned againe and told to the king that hee had beene at the water and done his command. "What saw yee there?" said the king. "Sir," said hee, "I saw nothing but the water wap and waves waune." "Ah, traitour untrue!" said king Arthur, "now hast thou betraied me two times. Who would have wend that thou that hast beene unto me so selfe and deere, and thou art named a noble knight, and wouldest betray mee for the rich sword? But now goe againe lightly, for thy long tarying putteth me in great jeopardie of my life, for I have taken cold; and but if thou doe as I commaund thee, and if ever I may see thee, I shall sley thee with my owne hands, for thou wouldst for my rich sword see me dead." Then sir

[1] *Eft.*—i. e. again. The edition of 1634 has changed it to *after*.

Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly tooke it up, and went to the waters side; and there hee bound the girdell about the hilts, and then hee threw the sword into the water as farre as hee might; and there came an arme and an hand above the water, and met it and caught it, and so shooke it thrise and brandished.

And then the hand vanished away with the sword in the water. So sir Bedivere came againe to the king, and told him what he had seene. "Alas!" said the king, "helpe me from hence, for I dread me I have taried over long." Then sir Bedivere took king Arthur upon his backe, and so went with him to the waters side. And when they were at the waters side, even fast by the banke hoved a little barge with many faire ladies in it, and among them all was a queene, and all they had blacke hoods, and they wept and shriked when they saw king Arthur.

"Now put mee into the barge," said the king; and so hee did softly; and there received him three queenes with great mourning, and so these three queenes set them downe, and in one of their laps king Arthur laide his head. And then that queene said, "Ah! deer brother, why have ye taried so long from me? Alas! this wound on your head hath taken over much cold." And so then they rowed from the land, and sir Bediver beheld al those ladies goe from him; then sir Bedivere cried, "Ah! my lord Arthur, what shall become of mee now ye goe from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies?" "Comfort thy selfe," said king Arthur, "and do as well as thou maiest, for in mee is no trust for to trust in; for I wil into the vale of Avilion for to heale me of my greivous wound; and if thou never heere more of mee, pray for my soule." But evermore the queenes and the ladies wept and shriked that it was pittie for to heare them. And as soone as sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, hee wept and wailed, and so tooke the forrest; and so he went all the night, and in the morning hee was ware betweene two hills of a chappell and an hermitage.

CHAP. CLXIX.—How sir Bedivere found king Arthur dead on the morrow in an hermitage, and how he abode there with the hermit.

THEN was sir Bedivere glad, and thither he went; and when hee came into the chappell, hee saw where lay an hermit groveling upon all foure there fast by a tombe newly graven. When the hermit saw sir Bedivere, hee knew him well, for he was but a little before bishop of Canterbury, that sir Mordred had banished away. "Sir," said sir Bedivere, "what man is there buried that yee pray so fast for?" "My faire sonne," said the hermit, "I wot not verily, but by deeming; but this night at midnight heere came a great number of ladies, which brought this dead corpes, and prayed mee to bury him; and heere they offered an hundred tapers, and gave me an hundred besaunts." "Alas!" said sir Bedivere, "that was my lord king Arthur that heere lyeth buried in this chappell." Then sir Bedivere sowned; and when hee awoke, hee prayed the hermite that hee might abide with him there still to live with fasting and prayers, "for from hence will I never goe," said sir Bedivere, "by my will, but all the dayes of my life heere to pray for my lord king Arthur." "Yee are welcome to mee," said the hermite, "for I know you better then yee weene that I doe; for yee are that bold Bedivere, and the noble duke sir Lucan the butler was your owne brother."

Then sir Bedivere told the hermite all as yee heard before; so sir Bedivere abode there still with the hermite, which had beene before the bishop of Canterbury. And there sir Bedivere put upon him poore cloathes, and served the hermite full lowly in fasting and in prayers. Thus of king Arthur I finde no more written in my coppie[1] of the certaintie of his death. But thus was hee led away in a barge, wherein were three queenes; that one was king Arthurs sister Morgan le Fay; the other was the queene of

[1] *In my coppie.—In bookes that ben auctorysed,* Caxton.

Northgalis; and the third was the queene of the wast lands; and there was Nimue the chiefe lady of the lake, which had wedded sir Pelleas the good knight; and this lady had done much for king Arthur, for shee would never suffer sir Pelleas to bee in no place where as hee should bee in danger of his life, and so hee lived to the uttermost of his dayes with her in great rest. More of the death of king Arthur could I never find, but that ladies brought him unto the burials, and such one was buried there, that the hermite bare witnesse, that some times was bishop of Canterbury; but yet the hermite knew not of a certaine that it was verely the body of king Arthur. For this tale sir Bedivere, knight of the round table, made it plainly to be written.

CHAP. CLXX.—Of the opinion of some men of the death of king Arthur, and how queene Guenever made her a nunne in Almesbury.

OME men yet say in many parts of England that king Arthur is not dead,[1] but had by the will of our Lord Jesu Christ into another place; and men say that hee will come againe, and hee shall winne the holy crosse. I will not say that it shall bee so, but rather I will say that heere in this world hee changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tombe this verse: "Hic jacet Arthurus,[2] rex quondam, rexque futurus."

Thus leave wee here sir Bedivere with the hermit, that

[1] *Not dead.*—It is hardly necessary to state that it was so prevalent a legend in the Middle Ages that king Arthur was not dead, but that he was living in "faerie," and destined to return to the earth and again rule over the Britons, that it became a proverbial phrase for those who indulged in vain hopes.

[2] *Hic jacet Arthurus.*—William of Malmesbury says that the tomb of king Arthur was never found, and that this was the ground of the belief that he was not dead. Matthew Paris and other later chroniclers pretend that the stone coffin containing the body of king Arthur was found at Glastonbury in the year 1191, and they say that it was identified by the inscription, *Hic jacet inclytus Britonum rex Arthurus, in insula Avalonis sepultus.*

dwelled that time in a chappell beside Glastinbury, and there was his hermitage. And so they lived in prayers and fastings and great abstinence. And when queene Guenever understood that her lord king Arthur was slaine, and all the noble knights, sir Mordred and all the remnant, then shee stole away and five ladies with her; and so shee went to Almesbury,[1] and there shee let make her selfe a nunne and ware white cloathes and blacke. And great pennance shee tooke as ever did sinfull lady in this land; and never creature could make her merry, but lived in fastings, prayers, and almes deedes, that all manner of people mervailed how vertuously shee was changed. Now leave wee queene Guenever in Almesbury, that was a nunne in white cloathes and blacke; and there shee was abbesse and ruler, as reason would. And turne wee from her, and speake we of sir Launcelot du Lake.

CHAP. CLXXI.—How when sir Launcelot heard of the death of king Arthur and of sir Gawaine, he came into England.

AND when he heard in his countrey that sir Mordred was crowned king in England, and made warre against king Arthur his owne father, and would not let him to land in his owne land; also it was told sir Launcelot how that sir Mordred had laid siege about the toure of London, because the queene would not wed him; then was sir Launcelot wonderous wroth, and said to his kinsmen: "Alas! that double traitour sir Mordred, now I repent mee that hee escaped my hands, for much shame hath hee done to my lord king Arthur; for I feele by the letter of sir Gawaine that my lord king Arthur is right hard bested. Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "that ever I should live to heare that most noble king that made mee knight, thus to bee overset with his subjects in his owne realme, and this dolefull letter that my

[1] *Almesbury.*—Amesbury in Wiltshire, where there was a well-known and ancient abbey of nuns of the Benedictine order.

lord sir Gawaine hath sent me before his death, praying mee to see his tombe; wit yee well his dolefull words shall never goe from my heart. For hee was a full noble knight as ever was borne, and in an unhappie houre was I borne, that ever I wretch should have that unhap to sley sir Gawaine, and sir Gaheris the good knight, and mine owne friend sir Gareth that noble knight.

"Alas! I may say that I am unhappie," said sir Launcelot, "that ever I should doe thus unhappely. Alas! might I never have hap to sley that traitour sir Mordred." "Leave your complaints," said sir Bors, "and first revenge you of the death of sir Gawaine; and it will bee well done that yee goe to see sir Gawaines tombe; and secondly, that yee revenge my lord king Arthur and queene Guenever." "I thanke you," said sir Launcelot, "for ever yee will my worship."

Then they made them ready in all the hast that might bee, with ships and gallies, with sir Lancelot and his hoost for to passe into England. And so hee passed over the sea, and arived at Dover, and there hee landed with seven kings, and their number was hidious to behold. Then sir Launcelot enquired of the men of Dover where king Arthur was become.

Then the people told him how that hee was slaine, with sir Mordred, and an hundred thousand died upon a day, and how sir Mordred gave king Arthur there the first battaile at his landing, and there was the good knight sir Gawaine slaine; and on the morrow sir Mordred fought with king Arthur upon Barraine-downe, and there king Arthur put sir Mordred to the worst. "Alas!" said sir Launcelot, "this is the heaviest tidings that ever came to mee. Now, faire sirs," said sir Launcelot, "I beseech you shew me the tombe of sir Gawaine."

And then certaine people of the towne brought him to the castle of Dover, and shewed him the tombe of sir Gawaine. Then sir Launcelot kneeled downe, and wept, and

prayed full heartely for his soule. And that night hee made a doale,[1] and al they that would come had as much flesh and fish, wine and ale, as they might eate and drinke, and every man and woman had twelve pence, come who would. Thus with his owne hands dealed he his money in a mourning gowne; and ever hee wept, and prayed them to pray for the soule of sir Gawaine. And on the morrow all the priests and clarkes that might be gotten in the countrey were there, and sung masse of Requiem. And there sir Launcelot offered first, and hee offered an hundred pound, and then the seven kings offered fortie pound a peece. And also there was a thousand knights, and each of them offered a pound; and the offering dured from the morning to night. And sir Launcelot lay two nights upon his tombe in prayers and in weeping. Then on the third day sir Launcelot called unto him the kings, dukes, earles, barrons, and knights, and thus hee said: "My faire lords, I thanke you all of your comming hither into this countrey with me; but wee come to late, and that shall repent me while I live, but against death there may no man rebell. But sith it is so," said sir Launcelot, "I will my selfe ride and seeke my lady queene Guenever, for as I heare say shee hath had much paine and great disease, and I have heard say that shee is fled into the west countrey; therefore yee all shall abide mee heere, and but if I come againe within fifteene dayes, then take your ships and depart into your countries, for I will doe as I have said to you."

CHAP. CLXXII.—How sir Launcelot departed for to seeke queene Guenever, and how hee found her at Almesbury.

THEN came sir Bors de Ganis, and said, "My lord sir Launcelot, what thinke yee to doe, now to ride in this realme? wit you well yee shall finde few friends." "Bee as it may," said sir Launcelot, "keepe you still heere, for I will forth

[1] *Doale.*—A distribution of charity.

on my journey, and neither man nor child shall goe with mee." So it was no boote to strive, but hee departed and rode westward, and there hee sought seven or eight dayes, and at the last hee came unto a nunry. And then was queene Guenever ware of sir Launcelot as hee walked in the cloyster; and when shee saw him there, shee sowned three times, that all the ladies and gentlewomen had worke enough for to hold the queene up. So when shee might speake, shee called ladies and gentlewomen unto her, and said, "Yee mervaile, faire ladies, why I make this cheere. Truly," said shee, "it is for the sight of yonder knight which yonder standeth; wherefore I pray you all to call him unto mee." And when sir Launcelot was brought unto her, then shee said, "Through this knight and mee all these warres were wrought, and the death of the most noble knights of the world; for through our love that wee have loved together is my most noble lord slaine. Therefore wit thou well, sir Launcelot, I am set in such a plight to get my soules health; and yet I trust, through Gods grace, that after my death for to have the sight of the blessed face of Jesu Christ, and at the dreadfull day of dome to sit on his right side. For as sinfull creatures as ever was I are saints in heaven.

"Therefore, sir Launcelot, I require thee and beseech thee heartely, for all the love that ever was betweene us two, that thou never looke mee more in the visage. And furthermore I command thee on Gods behalfe right straightly, that thou forsake my company, and that unto thy kingdome shortly thou returne againe, and keepe well thy realme from warre and wracke. For as well as I have loved thee, sir Launcelot, now mine heart will not once serve mee to see thee; for through mee and thee is the floure of kings and knights destroyed. Therefore, sir Launcelot, goe thou unto thy realme, and there take thee a wife, and live with her in joy and blisse. And I beseech you heartely, pray for mee unto our Lord God, that I may amend my misse living."

"Now, sweete madame," said sir Launcelot, "would yee that I should now returne againe into my countrey, and there to wed a lady? Nay, madame, wit yee well that I will never while I live; for I shall never bee so false to you, of that I have promised, but the same desteny that yee have taken you unto, I will take mee unto, for to please God, and speciall to pray for you."

"If thou wilt doe so," said the queene, "hold thy promise; but I may not beleeve but that thou wilt returne to the world againe." "Yee say well," said hee, "yet wist yee mee never false of my promise, and God defend but that I should forsake the world like as yee have done. For in the quest of the sanegreall I had forsaken the vanities of the world, had not your lord beene. And if I had don so at that time with my heart, will, and thought, I had passed all the knights that were in the quest of the sanegreall, except sir Galahad my sonne. And therefore, my lady dame Guenever, sithence yee have taken you unto perfection, I must needes take me unto perfection of right.

"For I take record of God in you have I had mine earthly joy. And if I had found you so disposed now, I had cast mee for to have had you into mine owne realme and countrey.

CHAP. CLXXIII.—How sir Launcelot came unto the hermitage where the archbishop of Canterbury was, and how hee tooke the habite unto him.

UT sithence I finde you thus disposed, I ensure you faithfully that I will take mee to pennance, and pray while my life lasteth, if I may finde any good hermite, either gray or white, that will receive mee. Wherefore, madame, I pray you kisse mee once and never more." "Nay," said the queene, "that shall I never doe, but abstaine you from such things." And so they departed. But there was never so hard a

hearted man but hee would have wept to see the sorrow that they made; for there was a lamentation as though they had beene stungen with speares, and many times they sowned, and the ladies beare the queene to her chamber; and sir Launcelot awoke,[1] and went and tooke his horse and rode all that day and all that night in a forrest weeping. And at the last hee was ware of an hermitage and a chappell that stood betweene two cliffes, and then hee heard a little bell ring to masse, and thither he rode and alighted, and tied his horse to the gate, and heard masse; and he that sung the masse was the bishop of Canterbury. Both the bishop and sir Bedivere knew sir Launcelot, and they spake together after masse; but when sir Bedivere had told him his tale all whole, sir Launcelots heart almost brast for sorrow; and sir Launcelot threw abroad his armour, and said, "Alas! who may trust this world?"

And then hee kneeled downe on his knees, and prayed the bishoppe for to shrive him and assoile him; and then hee besought the bishop that hee might bee his brother. Then the bishoppe said, "I will gladly." And then hee put an habite upon sir Lancelot, and there hee served God day and night with prayers and fastings.

Thus the great hoast abode at Dover. And then sir Lionell tooke fifteene lords with him, and rode to London to seeke sir Launcelot; and there sir Lionell was slaine and many of his lords. Then sir Bors de Ganis made the great hoast to goe home againe unto their owne countrey; and sir Bors, sir Ector de Maris, sir Blamor, sir Bleoberis, and with moe other of sir Launcelots kinne, tooke on them to ride through all England to seeke sir Launcelot.

So sir Bors rode so long till hee came unto the same chappell where sir Launcelot was; and so sir Bors heard a little bell knell that rung to masse, and there hee alighted, and heard masse. And when masse was done, the bishoppe, sir Launcelot, and sir Bedivere came unto sir Bors; and

[1] *Awoke.*—i. e. recovered from his swoon.

when hee saw sir Launcelot in that manner of clothing, then hee prayed the bishop that hee might bee in the same sewte. And so there was an habite put upon him, and there he lived in prayers and fasting. And within halfe a yeare there was come sir Galihud, sir Galihodin, sir Bleoberis, sir Villiers, sir Clarrus, and sir Gahalantine. So these seven noble knights abode there still. And when they saw that sir Launcelot had taken him unto such perfection, they had no list to depart, but tooke such an habite as hee had. Thus they endured in great pennance sixe yeares, and then sir Launcelot tooke the habite of pristhood, and twelve monethes hee sung the masse. And there was none of these other knights but that they red in bookes, and helped for to sing masse and ring bells, and did lowly all manner of service; and so their horses went where they would, for they tooke no regard in worldly riches. For when they saw sir Lancelot endure such penance, in prayer and in fasting, they tooke no force what paine they endured for to see the noblest knight of the world take such abstinence so that hee waxed full leane. And thus upon a night there came a vision unto sir Launcelot, and charged him, in remission of all his sinnes, to hast him towards Almesbury, "and by that time thou come there thou shalt finde queene Guenever dead, and therefore take thy fellowes with thee, and also purvey thee an horse beere, and bring you the corps of her, and bury it by her lord and husband, the noble king Arthur." So this vision came thrice unto sir Launcelot in one night.

CHAP. CLXXIV.—How sir Launcelot went with his seven fellowes to Almesbury, and found queene Guenever dead, whom they brought to Glastinbury.

THEN sir Launcelot rose up or it was day, and told the hermite thereof. "It is well done," said the hermit, "that ye disobey not this vision." Then sir Launcelot tooke his seven

fellowes with him, and on foote they went from Glastinbury, the which is little more then thirtie mile; and thither they came within two dayes, for they weare weake and feeble to goe. And when sir Launcelot was come to Almesbury, within the nunry, queene Guenever died but halfe an houre before; and the ladies told sir Launcelot that queene Guenever had told all, or shee died, that sir Launcelot had beene priest neere twelve moneths, "And hither hee commeth as fast as he may for to fetch my corps; and beside my lord king Arthur hee shall bury mee." Wherefore the queene said, in hearing of them all, "I beseech Almightie God that I may never have power to see sir Launcelot with my worldy eyes." "And this," said all the ladies, "was ever her prayer all those two dayes untill shee was dead." Then sir Launcelot saw her visage, but hee wept not greatly, but sighed; and so hee did all the observance of the service himselfe, both the dirige at night and the masse on the morrow. And there was ordained an horse beere; and so with an hundred torches ever burning about the corps of the queen, and ever sir Launcelot with his seven fellowes went about the beere singing and reading many an holy and devout orison, and frankensence upon the corps encensed. Thus sir Launcelot and his eight[1] fellowes went on foote from Almesbury untill they came to Glastinbury. And when they were come to the chappell and the hermitage, there shee had a durge[2] with great devotion; and on the morrow the hermite that was sometime bishop of Canterbury sung the masse of requiem with great devotion; and sir Launcelot was the first that offred, and then offred all his eight[1] fellowes. And then shee was wrapped in seared clothes of Reines from the top to the toe in thirtie fold, and then shee was put in a web of lead, and after in a coffin of marble. And when shee was put into the earth, sir Launcelot sowned, and lay long upon the ground

[1] *Eight.*—So Caxton; yet it ought apparently to be *seven.*
[2] *Durge.*—*A dirige,* Caxton.

while the hermite came and awaked him, and said, "Yee are to blame, for yee displease God with such manner of sorrow making." "Truly," said sir Launcelot, "I trust I doe not displease God, for hee knoweth well mine entent, for my sorrow was not nor is not for any rejoyceing of sinne, but my sorrow may never have an end; for when I remember and call to minde her beautie, her bountie, and her noblenesse, that was as well with her king my lord Arthur as with her; and also when I saw the corps of that noble king and noble queene so lye together in that cold grave made of earth, that sometime were so highly set in most honourable places; truely mine heart would not serve mee to susteine my wretched and carefull body. Also and when I remember mee how through my default, and through my presumption and pride, that they were both laid full low, the which were peerlesse that ever were living of christian people; wit yee well," said sir Launcelot, "this remembred, of their kindnesse, and of mine unkindnesse, sanke and emprest so in my heart, that all my naturall strength failed mee, so that I might not sustaine my selfe."

CHAP. CLXXV.—How sir Launcelot began for to waxe sicke, and after died, and then his body was borne unto Joyous-gard, there to bee buried.

THEN sir Launcelot never after eate but little meate, nor dranke, but continually mourned untill hee was dead; and then hee sickned more and more, and dried and dwined[1] away; for the bishop nor none of his fellowes might not make him to eate, and little hee dranke, that hee was then waxed shorter by a cubit then hee was, that the people could not know him. For ever-more day and night hee prayed, but needfully, as nature required, sometime hee slumbered a broken sleepe, and alwayes hee was lying groveling upon

[1] *Dwined.*—Pined; shrunk.

king Arthurs and queene Guenevers tombe; and there was no comfort that the bishop, nor sir Bors, nor none of all his fellowes could make him, it availed nothing.

Oh, yee mightie and pompeous lords, shining in the glory transitory of this unstable life, as in raigning over great realmes and mightie great countries, fortified with strong castles and toures, edified with many a rich citie; yee also, yee fierce and mightie knights, so valiant in adventurous deeds of armes; behold, behold, see how this mightie conquerour king Arthur, whom in his humaine life all the world doubted, see also the noble queene Guenever, which sometime sat in her chaire adorned with gold, pearles, and precious stones, now lye full low in obscure fosse or pit, covered with clods of earth and clay; behold also this mightie champion sir Launcelot, pearelesse of all knighthood, see now how hee lyeth groveling upon the cold mould, now being so feeble and faint that sometime was so terrible. How and in what manner ought yee to bee so desirous of worldly honour so dangerous! Therefore mee thinketh this present booke[1] is right necessary often to be read, for in it shall yee finde the most gracious, knightly, and vertuous war of the most noble knights of the world, whereby they gat praysing continually. Also mee seemeth, by the oft reading thereof, yee shall greatly desire to accustome your selfe in following of those gracious knightly deedes, that is to say, to dread God, and to love righteousnesse, faithfully and couragiously to serve your soveraigne prince; and the more that God hath given you the triumphall honour, the meeker yee ought to bee, ever feareing the unstablenesse of this deceitfull world. And so I passe over, and turne againe unto my matter.

So within sixe weekes after sir Launcelot fell sicke, and lay in his bed; and then hee sent for the bishoppe that there was hermite, and all his true fellowes. Then sir Launcelot said with dreery steeven,[2] "Sir bishoppe, I pray you

[1] *This present booke.*—Caxton adds, *called La Mort d'Arthur.*
[2] *Steeven.*—Sound; i. e. voice.

that yee will give mee all my rights that belongeth unto a christian man." "It shall not neede you," said the hermite and all his fellowes, "it is but a heavinesse of your blood, yee shall bee well amended, by the grace of God, to morrow."

"My faire lords," said sir Launcelot, "wit yee well my carefull body will into the earth; I have warning more then I will now say, therefore I pray you give mee my rights." So when hee was howseled and eneled,[1] and had all that a christian man ought to have, hee prayed the bishop that his fellowes might beare his body unto Joyous-gard.

Some men say Anwick, and some men say it is Bamborow.[2] "How be it," said sir Lancelot, "me repenteth sore, but I made mine avow somtime that in Joyous-gard I would be buried, and because of breaking of mine avow, I pray you all leade mee thither." Then there was weeping and wringing of hands among all his fellowes. So at the season of the night they went all to their beds, for they all lay in one chamber. So after midnight against day, the bishop that was hermite, as hee lay in his bed asleepe, hee fell on a great laughter; and therewith the fellowship awoke, and came unto the bishop, and asked him what hee ayled. "Ah, Jesu, mercy," said the bishop, "why did yee awake mee? I was never in all my life so merry and so well at ease." "Why, wherefore?" said sir Bors.

"Truely," said the bishop, "heere was sir Launcelot with mee, with more angels then ever I saw men upon one day; and I saw the angels heave up sir Launcelot towards heaven, and the gates of heaven opened against him." "It is but dretching of swevens,"[3] said sir Bors; "for I doubt not sir Launcelot ayleth nothing but good." "It may well

[1] *Howseled and eneled.*—Received the sacrament and been anointed with the extreme unction.

[2] *Bamborow.*—These conjectures about the site of Joyous-gard are curious enough. I have already remarked that it is commonly supposed to have been intended for Berwick.

[3] *Dretching of swevens.*—Vexing of dreams.

bee," said the bishop, "goe to his bed, and then shall yee prove the sooth."

So when sir Bors and his fellowes came to his bed, they found him starke dead, and hee lay as hee had smiled, and the sweetest savour about him that ever they smelled. Then was there weeping and wringing of hands, and the greatest dole they made that ever made men. And on the morrow the bishop sung his masse of requiem; and after the bishop and all those nine[1] knights put sir Launcelot in the same horse beere that queene Guenever was laid in before that shee was buried.

And so the bishop and they altogether went with the corps of sir Launcelot dayly till they came unto Joyous-gard, and ever they had an hundred torches burning about him.

And so within fifteene dayes they came to Joyous-gard; and there they laid his corps in the body of the quire, and sung and red many psalters and prayers over him and about him; and ever his visage was laid open and naked, that all folke might behold him, for such was the custome in those dayes that all men of worship should so lye with open visage till that they were buried. And right thus as they were at their service, there came sir Ector de Maris, that had sought seven yeare all England, Scotland, and Wales, seeking his brother sir Launcelot.

CHAP. CLXXVI.—How sir Ector found sir Launcelot his brother dead, and how Constantine reigned next after king Arthur, and of the end of this booke.

AND when sir Ector de Maris heard such noise and light in the queere of Joyous-gard, hee alighted, and put his horse away from him, and came into the queere; and there hee saw

[1] *Nine.*—Caxton gives the same number, though it is not clear how the knights had increased from seven.

men sing the service full lamentably; and all they knew sir Ector, but hee knew not them. Then went sir Bors unto sir Ector, and told him how there lay his brother sir Launcelot dead.

And then sir Ector threw his shield, his sword, and his helme from him; and when hee beheld sir Launcelots visage hee fell downe in a sowne, and when hee awaked it were hard for any tongue to tell the dolefull complaints that he made for his brother. "Ah, sir Lancelot," said hee, "thou were head of all christen knights! And now I dare say," said sir Ector, "that, sir Launcelot, there thou liest, thou were never matched of none earthly knights hands; and thou were the curtiest knight that ever beare shield; and thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrood horse, and thou were the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman; and thou were the kindest man that ever strooke with sword; and thou were the goodliest person that ever came among presse of knights; and thou were the meekest man and the gentlest that ever eate in hall among ladies; and thou were the sternest knight to thy mortall foe that ever put speare in the rest."

Then there was weeping and dolour out of measure. Thus they kept sir Launcelots corps above the ground fifteene dayes, and then they buried it with great devotion; and then at leasure they went all with the bishop of Canterbury unto his hermitage, and there they were together more then a moneth. Then sir Constantine, which was sir Cadors son of Cornewaile, was chosen king of England; and hee was a full noble knight, and worshipfully hee ruled this realme. And then this king Constantine sent for the bishop of Canterbury, for hee heard say where hee was, and so hee was restored unto his bishopricke, and left that hermitage; and sir Bedivere was there ever still an hermite unto his lives end. Then sir Bors de Ganis, sir Ector de Maris, sir Gahalantine, sir Galihud, sir Galihodin, sir Blamor, sir Bleoberis, sir Villiers le Valiaunt, sir Clarrus of

Claremount, all these knights drew them to their countries, how bee it king Constantine would have had them with him, but they would not abide in this realme; and there they lived in their countries as holy men. And some English bookes make mention that they went never out of England after the death of sir Launcelot, but that was favour of makers.[1]

For sir Bors, sir Ector, sir Blamor, and sir Bleoberis went into the Holy Land, there as Jesu Christ was both quicke and dead, anon as they had stablished their lands; for sir Launcelot commanded them so to doe or ever hee passed out of this world. And these foure knights did many battailes upon the miscreaunts and Turkes;[2] and there they died upon Good Fryday for Gods sake.

Heere is the end of the whole booke of king Arthur and of his noble knights of the round table, that when they were whole together there was ever an hundred and fortie. Also heere is the end of the death of king Arthur. I pray you all, gentlemen and gentlewomen, that read this book of king Arthur and his knights from the beginning to the ending, pray for mee while I am alive, that God send mee good deliverance.

And when I am dead, I pray you all pray for my soule. For this booke was finished the ninth yeare of the raigne of king Edward the Fourth, by sir Thomas Maleor,[3] knight, as Jesu helpe mee for his great might, as hee is the servant of Jesu both day and night.

Thus endeth this noble and joyous booke entituled La Mort Darthur, notwithstanding it treateth of the birth, life, and acts of the said king Arthur and of his noble knights

[1] *Makers.*—Poets. This name for a poet, which was long preserved in the Scottish dialect, seems to have been common enough in English in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; but it seems not to have been understood by the printers of the edition of 1634, who have turned it into *markes.*

[2] *Turkes.*—Sir Thomas Malory seems to have forgotten that there were no Turks in the Holy Land in the fifth and sixth centuries.

[3] *Maleor.*—*Maleoure,* Caxton.

of the round table, and their mervailous enquests and adventures, the achieving of the holy sancgreall, and in the end the dolorous death and departing out of this world of them all.[1]

[1] The following is the full colophon of Caxton's edition :—" Thus endeth this noble and joyous booke, entytled La Mort Dathur. Notwythstandyng it treateth of the byrth, lyf, and actes of the sayd kynge Arthur, and of his noble knyghtes of the rounde table, theyr marveyllous enquestes and adventures, thachyevyng of the sang real, and in the ende la Morte Darthur, with the dolourous deth and departyng out of this worlde of them al. Whiche booke was reduced into Englysshe by syr Thomas Malory, knight, as afore is sayd, and by me devyded into xxi. bookes, chaptyred, and emprynted, and fynysshed in thabbey Westmestre the last day of July, the yere of our Lord MCCCCLXXXV. Caxton me fieri fecit."

FINIS.

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